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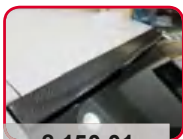
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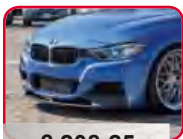
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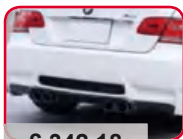
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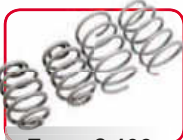
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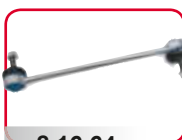
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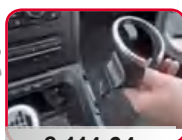
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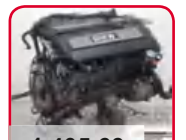
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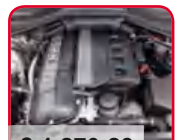
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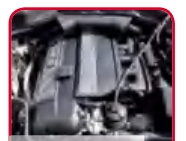
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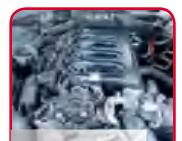
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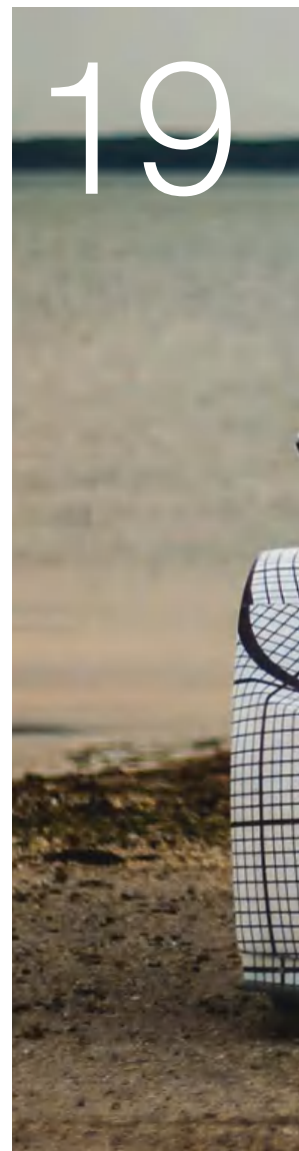
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FAMILY | JEWELS

Words: Daniel Bevis
Photos: Patrik Karlsson

Believe it or not, this is Daniel Larsson's first car, purchased when he was just 13. Today, having picked 'M3', 'V8' and 'brown' out the buzzword bag, he and his father have created something brilliantly unique...



The idea of building a car in tribute or homage to another is a tricky and potentially troubling one. Look at the Ford GT40, for example, or the AC Cobra – these are iconic, revered and widely beloved motors with instantly recognisable silhouettes, race provenance in spades, and hordes of borderline-obsessive fans who would genuinely consider chopping in their own blood relatives in part exchange for a true example of the breed. They're ethereal and, for most, unobtainable things – and, as such, countless replicas exist. Some of them are precise re-creations, built by craftsmen who've remained faithful to the original specs, are insistent on only using the

materials and tolerances that would have been employed in period, and want to own something as close to the original as possible. Others, conversely, are thrown together for a few grand, on a Cortina chassis with a tired Pinto shoving the wonky fibreglass panels down the road. It's a mixed bag, to say the least. That's not to devalue the kit car genre of course, merely to highlight certain differences in perspective.

The point of all of this is that we're not looking at a genuine E30 M3 here. This will be cheery news to the purists among you... although we're guessing there aren't many, as the modified M3s we've featured before (of which we've lost count, it's a competitive game) have always been so well received.

But anyway, this particular E30 rolled out of the factory as a humble 318i, and it's taken its owner Daniel Larsson, along with his father Anders, a lot of effort, research, and tenacity to get it to this finished state. You see, turning a cooking E30 into an M3 replica isn't simply a case of bolting on a new set of arches; while the trademark motorsport-bred box arches are very much a defining feature of the body, it's a fairly well-documented fact that the M3 didn't share a lot of panels with the lesser models – while the basic shell was shared, the M3 had a dozen different panels designed to optimise airflow and help it cut through the air like a buttered lark, with pretty much just the bonnet and roof being carried over. The



Larssons, then, took a holistic approach to getting the job done right.

But let's begin at the beginning, shall we? "My dad bought this car as a 318i when I was 13 years old," says Daniel, taking it back to the old school with aplomb (yes, if you follow that thought process to its logical conclusion, you'll arrive at the fact that this is his first car. And there's not a lot of folk who can boast as cool a first car as this...). "The idea was always that we'd build my first car together, and the initial plan was to make a sort of M3 replica in fibreglass."

However, we all know how easily these plans can spiral out of control, and it wasn't long before the eager Swedish duo were sizing up a set of genuine steel M3 wings – after all, if you're going to do it, you might as well do it properly. And the

obsession with authenticity snowballed from there. "My dad's a perfectionist, and it's easier to get everything to line up properly if you're starting with the genuine wings," Daniel reasons. With the perfect fit achieved, the blistered haunches were soon augmented by top-notch fibreglass M3 bumpers at either end, along with the side-skirts to suit. The tail end received a lot of work too, as the genuine M3s had a re-angled rear window, again for aerodynamic purposes. You'll note that the angle is correct on this car, the shiny brown C-pillars here neatly flow into the boot just as they're supposed to – and that's a genuine M3 spoiler too, sitting atop a perfect fibreglass interpretation of the classic raised M3 bootlid.

In a roundabout sort of way, it was always going to be a logical move for this build to

get elbows-deep in the shell and start replacing things left, right and centre. "The car looked to be in pretty good shape when we first got it, although the more we tore it down the more rust we found in the classic E30 places," Daniel recalls. Reason enough for an M3 tribute then, right? "When he started looking for a car for me, my dad's initial plan was to find a solid car with a sunroof (which pretty much all M3s had, and that helped the project idea along!), a leather interior and a small engine so I could afford to insure it when I reached 18." But once again we find a fairly significant deviation from the plan: you've almost certainly noticed that there's a V8 in there, and that's neither a small engine nor an M3 engine. That's an idea that came way out of left-field.

"In my childhood it was *The Fast And The Furious* that inspired me and made me want



Outside and engine bay get all the attention, but the interior's not been forgotten about, with E36 M3 Vader seats and custom black headlining



"The car gets a lot of compliments and has won trophies at big shows but we built it to be driven"

V8 E30

ENGINE & TRANSMISSION

4.0-litre V8 M60B40, gold detailing, smoothed bay, five-speed manual ZF gearbox

CHASSIS

7.5x17" (front) and 8.5x17" (rear) Lenso BSX wheels with Hankook Ventus V12 tyres, K-Sport Street coilovers, Brembo four-pots (front) with 305x28mm discs, E30 325i brakes (rear)

EXTERIOR

Resprayed in BMW Marrakesh brown, genuine M3

wings, fibreglass front and rear bumpers, side skirts, C-pillars and bootlid, genuine M3 boot spoiler, angel eyes

INTERIOR

E36 M3 Vader seats, M Tech II steering wheel, custom audio, custom black headlining

THANKS

Special thanks to my dad, Anders Larsson, who did this project with me, he's the best! Also thanks to Speeding.nu and Bakaxeldelar.se

DATA FILE

to build something cool, so I just wanted big spoilers for the car at first – I was 15! – and from there we customised an aftermarket body kit; it wasn't until later that, older and wiser, we got a little more tasteful with it and went for the OEM M3 style. And then we started thinking about the engine..."

Just for a minute, let's play a little game of six-degrees-of-separation. How do we get from the GT40 and the Cobra we were thinking about back there in the opening paragraph to the Larssons' E30? Well, those two blue-chip classics were powered by highly-tuned Ford V8s, of course. So was another contemporary dream car, the De Tomaso Mangusta (whose name, incidentally, meaning 'Mongoose', was so chosen because mongooses eat cobras – another link to our opener there). De Tomaso went on to make a model called the

Guarà in the 1990s, which was powered by a BMW M60B40 V8. And that's the engine that we find sitting in this E30. There you go, we did it in just three steps.

"I wanted a V8 because I love the sound," Daniel grins. "And the advantage of a big-capacity engine is that you get a lot of unstressed power from it in stock form, so it won't be breaking down all the time." It also helps, naturally, that the process of fitting an M60 into an E30 is a pretty well-trodden path; not common by any means, but certainly something that's been done before, so there's plenty of advice to be sought online, and all sorts of shared wisdom on which are the optimal parts to make the whole thing work happily. It's worth noting too that the M60 was designed with lightness in mind; it's not the case that Daniel and Anders have slung a boat anchor

in the nose of the 3 Series and cocked up the weight balance, because this particular V8 features an aluminium block and cylinder heads, as well as a plastic intake manifold – so the guys were free to revel in all of that extra horsepower without having to compromise on weight or wonky dynamics. They've gone all-out to make a feature of the engine too – the bay has been shaved, smoothed and wire-tucked to make the mighty bent-eight even more prominent, while the motor itself enjoys gold accents to complement the oh-so-retro brown.

Oh, and what a magnificent shade it is! BMW's own Marrakesh brown is the sort of colour you can imagine Oompa-Loompas swimming in, all gloopy and cocoa-rich. It's a shade you'd usually find on an X1 or possibly X6, although certain brave enthusiasts have bought into the old-school



appeal of the hue and slathered it across E9x 3 Series, 1Ms and all sorts. There really should be more brown cars in the world, and Daniel's M3 rep rocks the look far better than the phrase 'brown E30' might suggest. It also serves to really irritate the stuffy pipe-smokers of the concours world: jamming 'E30 M3', 'V8' and 'brown' into the same title is enough to see a few monocles clattering to the floor, but it really does make for a compelling combo. See, it pays to think outside of the proverbial box.

"People tend to like it, I think," says Daniel, somewhat guardedly. "If you're out driving and someone gives you a thumbs-up, or you see them rotating their head through 360 degrees like an owl as you drive past, that's probably a good sign." But, of course, winning respect was never the point of this build: it was about Daniel and his father

building a car together, and the finished product is far greater than that *Fast and Furious*-obsessed teenager could have ever envisaged. "The car gets a lot of compliments, and it has won some trophies at big shows as well as local meets, but we built it to be driven really. I drive it as much as I can – seeing friends, taking it on holiday, even using it on track." And it's the latter that must surely be the most jarring for any onlookers – a brown M3 is strange enough, but one this clean being used in anger, with the bellow of a V8? Well, you're only young once, right? No point building a car just to stand in the background polishing the thing, there's a world of race heritage to live up to. Why not raise a few eyebrows and take a few scalps?

As tributes go, this E30 represents a modern, offbeat take on the M3 with a

number of retro cues stirred in for good measure: the quest for authenticity has resulted in a bona fide homologation-model look, while the saccharine brown harks back to the 1970s and beyond. Conversely, the chassis is bang up to date, and that engine? You can't argue with 280-odd horses and a rumble that shakes the Tarmac.

It has taken countless hours in the garage to get the car this way, but Daniel and Anders cherish every late night, every blackened thumb, every moment of the father-and-son bonding experience. Some families do puzzles together. Some go sailing. Some play football. The Larssons? Well, they sketch out their dreams, then use power tools to turn them into real, tangible things. And if E30s like this are the result of such ambition, that's something to be seriously encouraged ●



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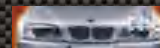
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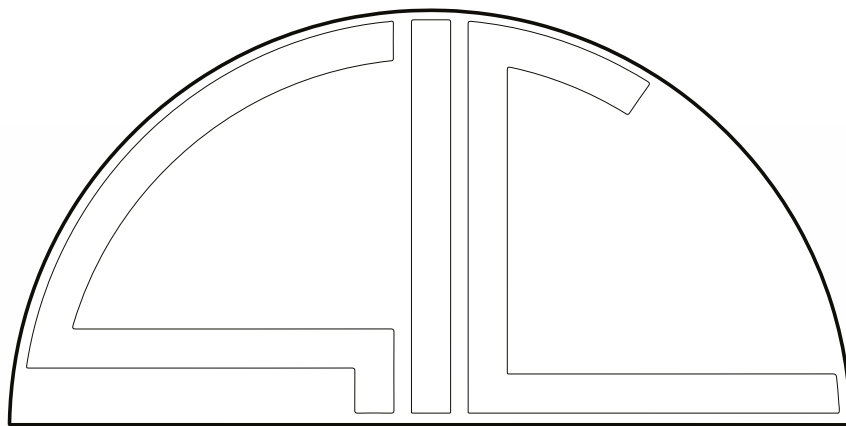
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CROSSING *THE* LINE



One of the most spectacular builds we've seen in a long time,
this M135i is quite unlike anything else.

Words:
Elizabeth de Latour

Photos:
Henry Phull @ Slam Sanctuary



When Bruce Gowans said he had plans for his M135, he wasn't lying. A year ago, this car was candy red with a modest boot build and Watercooled Industry wheels and now, well, it's pretty much unrecognisable. There's modifying your car and then there's forging ahead with an absolute vision that's uncompromised and single-minded in its intent. This car is what happens when someone makes that vision a reality.

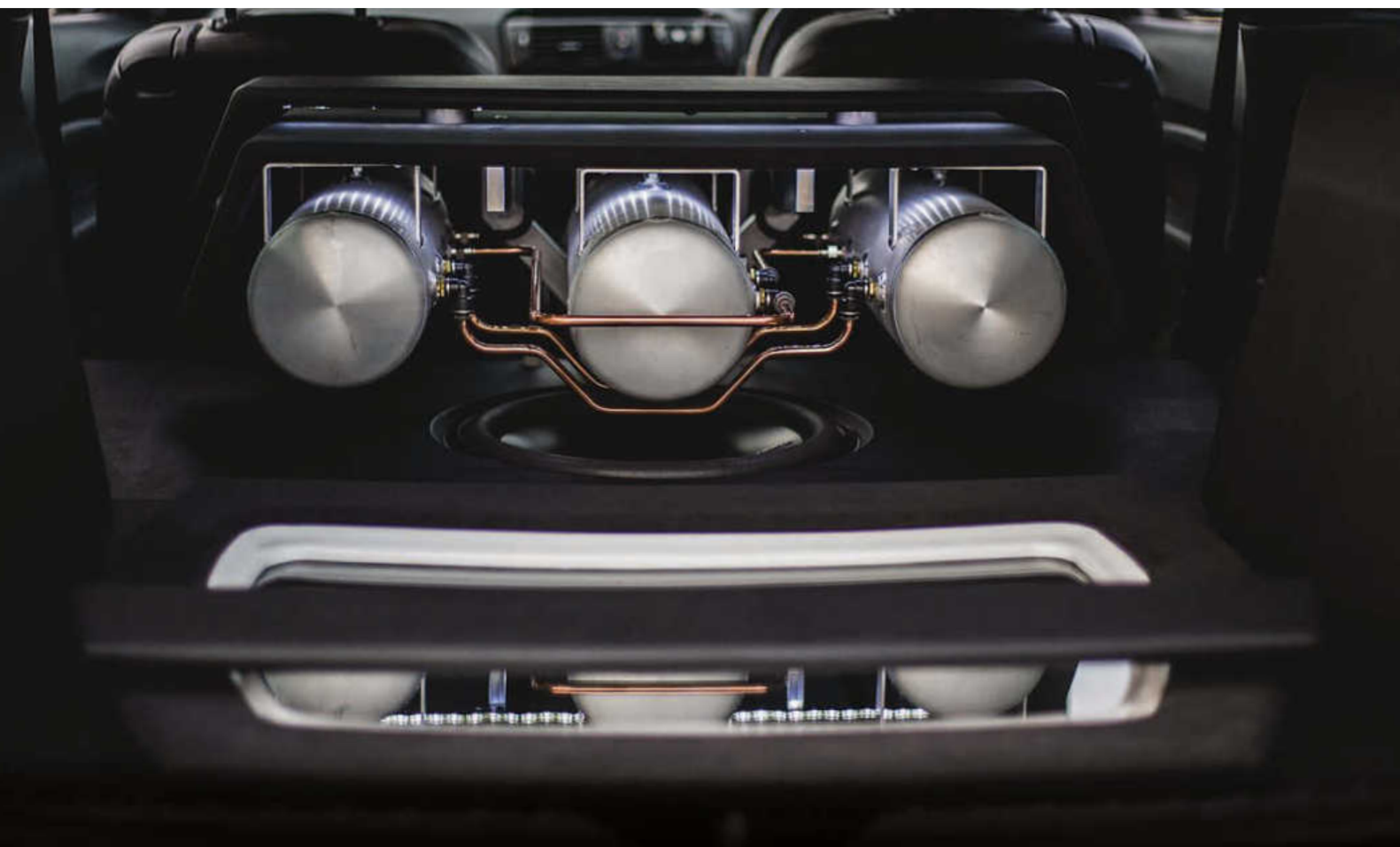
There is no typical modified BMW owner, and Bruce certainly fits into that non-box of atypicality. He is of the 'older' generation, shall we say, and resides in a tiny village in

the heart of the Bedfordshire countryside, a million miles away from the frenetic and eclectic world that is the modified BMW scene. But this mechanical engineer has a heart that pumps pure petrol and has spent his entire life flitting from modified car to modified car, with an underlying appreciation for BMW but never the opportunity to indulge that interest in Bavarian metal until he acquired this M135i. "I've been interested in BMWs ever since I was a lad and grew up into a petrolhead! I've been a fan since the first E30 M3 and seeing an E9 coupé on neighbour's drive when I walked to school and thinking how cool it looked. I bought the M135i, my first BMW,

for its 'performance for the price' factor and because the drivetrain, the engine and the transmission are such a great combination in this vehicle. I bought it brand-new in 2013 and was going to keep it stock..."

Clearly that didn't happen. It seems like the car was stock for all of five minutes before Bruce had started tinkering and while the mods started off sensibly and in a restrained manner, once the momentum began to build there was clearly no stopping Bruce (or the M135i). "The first mod was to get a new exhaust developed and fitted by Scorpion Exhausts. Then Luke and the guys at Plush supplied and fitted the air-ride, sourcing components from AirREX and an







Digital audio explained:

"The system in this car was spec'd to accommodate Bruce's passion for high resolution audio. It's cutting edge in the fact it can play any file format he wants and samples up to 196khz with bit depths of up to 24-bit. When you consider a CD (still reference in so many studios) samples at 44.1khz at 16-bit, that's a huge amount more information. Of course, all of the car's OEM equipment and functionality is retained and played through the new system alongside solid state hard drives, wireless streaming and various other inputs."

Carl Shakespeare, Director, Studio Incar

eLevel system from Accuair. This was closely followed by a carbon-fibre front splitter from SSDD," he says. "Spring 2014 brought a change in colour, with a candy red colour wrap from Avery called True Blood. New MD1 wheels from Watercooled Industries were added, closely followed by a Juice Box 4 (JB4) piggyback ECU from Burger Motorsports and a decat downpipe which were fitted at Performance Developments in Sunderland. The car went to Forge Motorsport in Gloucester to have one of its high-performance intercoolers fitted, along with one of its dump valves."

With all those mods on board, it made 400hp and 450lb ft of torque on the dyno and considering how blisteringly quick the standard M135i is, that's going to be more than enough power to keep Bruce happy. "After having the traction control kick in once too often, I took the decision to fit a

limited-slip diff to the car. Options were thin on the ground for this platform but Birds in Iver, Buckinghamshire developed a Quaife ATB for it, which has made a massive difference to the way the car drives."

And that is where the story would end for most people. A dramatic wrap, some exceedingly nice wheels, air-ride and some performance mods. A fine selection of upgrades. Job done. But that's not where this story ends, as you can clearly see.

"At the end of 2014 I planned to make some big changes to the car and started speaking to Carl Shakespeare at Studio Incar about my plans," he explains. "We discussed my ideas for a rear-seat delete and a high-end audio installation and things just got out of hand. I had already decided to try and get a BTCC body kit. I contacted West Surrey Racing and negotiated with the guys there to buy a genuine race car kit from their 2014/15

BMW 1 Series race car. However, fitting it proved more difficult than you might think! The BTCC cars have front and rear subframes and crash structures that are specified by TOCA and these also provide mounting points for the front and rear body panels. These didn't match up with the mounting and fixing points that BMW specify! It required the rear wings to be cut and tubbed – scary stuff! Luckily, Stylehaus in Northampton has some serious skills and brought the whole thing together.

"Shakey project managed the whole build with input from me, like my suggestion for the triple tank setup. Once the car was back from the bodyshop, and with a little bit of extra fettling by Fibreglass Phil in Kent (the manufacturer of the BTCC kit), the audio and air install could begin in earnest." With a bit of direction from Bruce, Shakey was free to run riot inside the M135i. The end result

“Both Shakey and I thought that translating this design into a vinyl wrap would be a high-on impossible task”



is an interior that feels like it's very much been built around the air and audio and one look inside leaves you in no doubt that this car's main purpose is to astound. The rear seats have been removed completely, replaced by the awesome triple floating tank setup that looks like a spaceship, illuminated from above and hovering over the massive 15" Hertz Mille sub which forms part of the incredibly high-end digital audio install, while the rear load space is home to the three Audison amps, on display in a beautifully designed enclosure. There's acres of Alcantara in here, which reaches up to cover the roof lining as well, while some extremely sexy custom door pods are home to Hertz Mille speakers. Finally, a custom

panel in the centre console (also trimmed in Alcantara) houses the controllers for the audio system and the air suspension. It's one of the most spectacular, special and perfectly-executed builds we've ever seen and it's nothing short of a work of art.

With such a spectacular build going on, the right wheels were going to be absolutely essential and Bruce was keen to move away from the usual suspects, like BBS and Rotiform, and try something different. "I had been in touch with Brada wheels in the States for a year or so, originally to try and get some wheels for my GT3," he says. "I spoke to Zane and we agreed a design and spec for the wheels that were destined to go on the BMW. However, because the car was

away having the body kit fitted, Shakey and I could only make an educated guess as to what the exact widths and offsets of the wheels would be, with us only knowing what the overall width of the BTCC car is and working back from those dimensions..." It can be hard enough to work out your exact wheel specs when you've got your car in front of you so this was most definitely a risky strategy but it worked and the resulting wheels are the perfect fit for the M135i. Bruce opted for Brada's BR1 cross-spokes with gloss black centres, matt black lips and stainless steel bolts in 9.5x19" at the front and 10.5x19" at the rear, the fitment perfect for tucking the wheels under the massive arches when the car is aired out.



F21 M135i

ENGINE & TRANSMISSION

3.0-litre straight-six turbo N55B30, JB4 piggyback ECU from Burger Motorsport, Scorpion full exhaust including a decat downpipe, Forge FMIC, Forge DV, stock ZF eight-speed automatic gearbox, Quaife ATB LSD from Birds

CHASSIS

9.5x19" (front) and 10.5x19" (rear) Brada BR1 three-piece wheels with gloss black lips, matt black faces and stainless hardware, with 235/35 (front) and 275/30 (rear) Goodyear Eagle Asymmetric 2 tyres, AirREX air-ride and Accuair eLevel management

EXTERIOR

BMW M Performance carbon fibre wing mirror shells, BMW M Performance black front grilles, BTCC body kit from WSR, Art Car wrap by JD Wraps

INTERIOR

Interior by Studio Incar, full digital audio install comprising Audison AV Quattro amp x2, Audison AV Uno amp, Audison bit Ten D processor, Audison bit Play HD source, Hertz Mille three-way front end, Hertz Mille 15" sub, rear seat delete, custom air installation, Alcantara roof lining, integrated audio and suspension controllers built in to the centre console

THANKS

Studio Incar and Shakey in particular for handling this project and for keeping my spirits up when I needed it, Zane and Jacob at Brada, Myles and Chris at Brada UK, Fibreglass Phil, Scorpion Exhausts, Forge Motorsport, the guys at Stylehaus, Luke Massy, Phil James, Kat and the team at JD Wraps, Voodoo Elie for getting me out of a tricky situation, and last but not least, Ed Hamilton at JK Engineering for being a great friend, being just as daft as me and as big a petrolhead as me!

In terms of styling, the kit alone wasn't enough for Bruce and he decided to take things to the next level. "The wrap design wasn't established until quite late in the build. I have always been a fan of the BMW Art Car projects but picking a design to base the wrap for the M135i was tricky. Several of the Art Cars are 'challenging', to say the least," he laughs, "but this Frank Stella design from 1976 was selected – it appealed to my inner engineer! Both Shakey and I thought that translating this design into a vinyl wrap would be a nigh-on impossible task, since the original consisted of lots of parallel horizontal and vertical lines; the hardest thing to do with vinyl wrap... Carl

contacted JD Wraps in Essex and a deal was struck. When I collected the car a week later I was amazed. The guys had done an awesome job." The combination of kit and wrap is one that is both single-handedly responsible for the utterly insane amount of attention this car garners but is also the most polarising aspect of the whole project. Some people love the wrap but hate the kit. Some people hate the kit but love the wrap. Some people hate them both. And some people like everything that this car has got going on! However you feel, it's a talking point and gets the car noticed. Bruce loves it, however, which ultimately is the most important thing.

Amazingly, all this work took just six

months, really not long at all considering just how much has gone into the build and how complete the transformation has been. Bruce chose the Players Classic show for the car's unveiling. It got as much attention as you'd expect and the sort of reactions you'd expect. "It seems to be very much a 'Marmite' car!" Bruce tells us. More importantly, though, he can now sit back and actually enjoy the car. Beyond the looks and the next-level interior, he's got a fast, powerful car that's great to drive, with an incredible sound system. It's a package that just begs to be taken out on the road and enjoyed and, in fact, that's now his only plan for the future ●





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PERFORMANCE BMW EIBACH COMPETITION WINNER UPDATE

We catch up with our Eibach competition winner as he gets his selection of Eibach goodies fitted.

Photos: Matt Woods

Back in April we ran one of our largest competitions to date: the chance to win a full chassis makeover from suspension manufacturer Eibach and receive full fitting at BMW specialist A Reeve Performance in Kings Lynn.

The lucky winner was Steve Buck, owner of a 2006 E92 335i SE, which had a remap but no chassis modifications. Totally blown away with his win, Steve confessed he had only entered on a whim. His wife had passed him a couple of magazines one Sunday evening to tidy away, and in a five-minute flick through he spotted the competition. Later, on his computer, whilst waiting for a

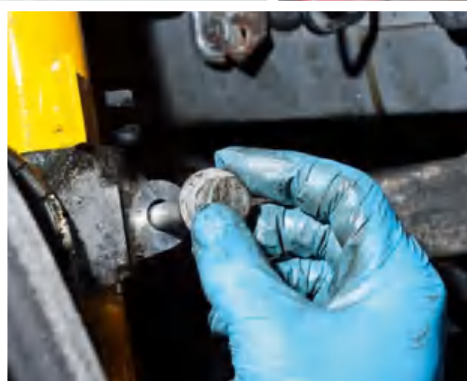
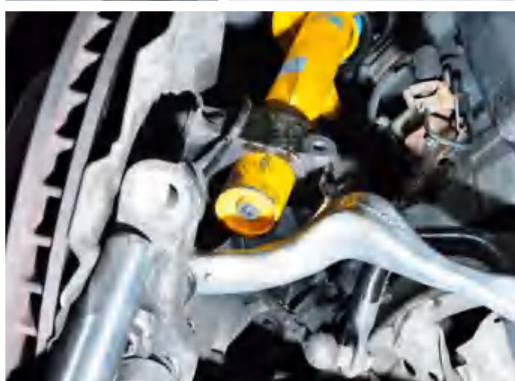
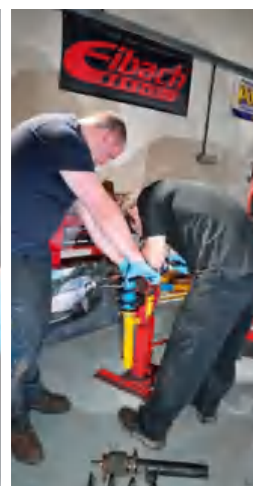
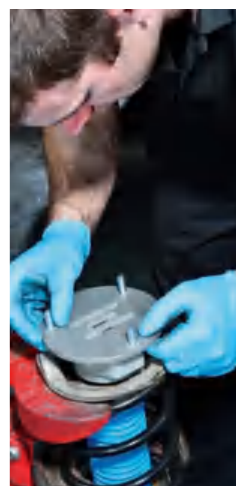
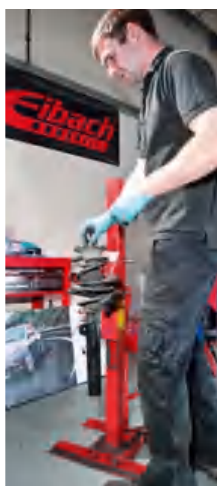
reply to an email he decided 'what the heck' and a minute later he had entered! After receiving the winning call from Eibach and discussing all the products available for his car, Steve made his decision: he'd like an Eibach Pro-Kit, the Eibach front and rear Anti-Roll Bar kit and Eibach Pro-Alignment adjustable front top mounts!

A date was fixed for the fitting and it was on a fine day in June that we found ourselves in King's Lynn in Norfolk. With the sun shining and the seagulls squawking overhead it seemed a shame that fish and chips and a stroll along the waterfront wasn't on the agenda! Matt the photographer was quick to snap the 'before' shots. Having recently moved into new premises, A Reeve Performance has a fantastic setup with a four-wheel alignment machine, a dyno within its own purpose-built room, as well as five bays and plenty of additional space for the race cars that Aaron, owner of A Reeve, has under his care. With over ten

years of experience, A Reeve Performance is an independent garage that prides itself in offering a full dealership service but with a personal touch. With services ranging from minor repairs, MoTs, full services through to race car builds and track support, A Reeve Performance is fast becoming a 'go to' specialist for enthusiasts.

Promptly Aaron got the car on the ramp, the wheels were removed and the E92 was raised up. Work started on the front first; removing the suspension units was a straightforward job. Steve opted to upgrade his damper units at the same time so a set of Bilstein B8s were supplied to work in harmony with the Eibach Pro-Kit. Aaron was quick to get the unit into the spring compressor to remove the original cup as this needed to be reused with the new combination. Matt took the opportunity to photograph the original suspension alongside the spanking new Eibach and Bilstein products before Aaron started to

assemble them together. Then the new top mount was greased up and put together. This Eibach adjustable top mount is a quality looking bit of kit which can offer between -1 to $+3^\circ$ of camber and $\pm 0.5^\circ$ of caster adjustments. It was a two-man job to torque the new top mount, which highlights the skill and experience needed when doing such work to your vehicle. As the car was going to be aligned properly at the end of the session it was not fully torqued at this stage, just enough for the damper to be manoeuvred into position.



Once the unit was together it was a straightforward swap onto the OE fitments. The beauty of Eibach products, and the Bilstein dampers for that matter, is that they can be termed as a 'bolt-on' product, which means they are a direct swap for the OEM parts, saving time (and therefore money) when fitting. Once both suspension units were back in place, and the wheel hubs back in situ – again another two-man job, Aaron moved on the front anti-roll bar. On the front of the E92 this is a simple job which just requires the removal of the front undertray. Again it was then literally a straight swap from the OE part to the Eibach upgrade which includes brand-new polyurethane bushes. With the undertray back in place it was time for the rear to be sorted.



The rear was a slightly more complex affair. To try and access the rear suspension units Aaron had to remove the camber arms to get the wheel hub off, before removing the exhaust rubbers, the strengthening brace and the exhaust mount, all to try and create a space to try and wiggle the spring out. Once the spring was out Aaron still had to lower the camber arm down so he could get the dampers out.

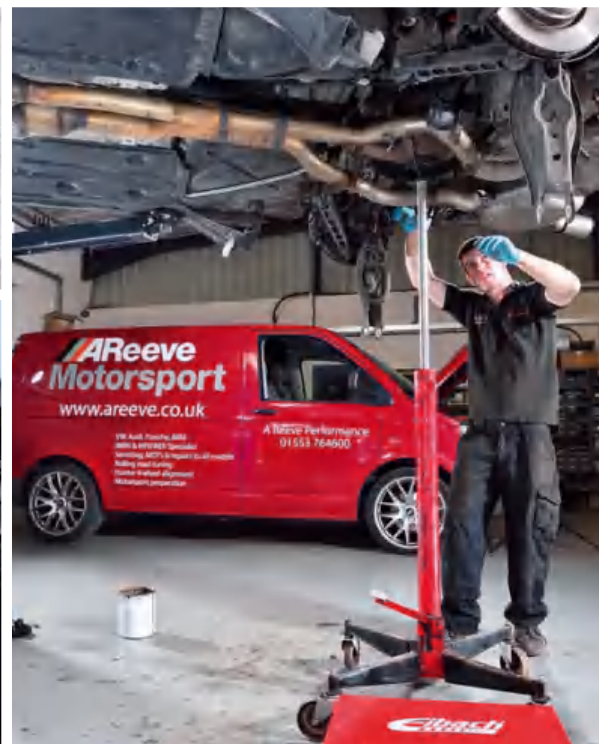


Then it was on to the removal of the anti-roll bar which was well tucked into the chassis. The subframe had to be lowered but then Aaron came up against a problem. Although he did his utmost to avoid having to undo the brake pipes, in the end Aaron had to as there just wasn't the room to allow for the subframe to drop down. The issue was that they had seized and as he tried to twist the bolt the plastic coating (which had corroded) moved with the bolt and this could potentially have snapped. After a discussion with Steve Aaron had the go-ahead to cut the brake pipes and replace them with new pipes made in-house from copper.

Finally the rear ARB was removed whilst the new brake pipes were being made, and the shiny red Eibach bar was slotted into place. The rear ARB is very slim but the Eibach model is a couple of mm thicker which can add a stiffness increase of up to 25% over the OEM version. After the new brake pipes were fitted Aaron start the gradual process of piecing all the parts back together. Once the exhaust and then the

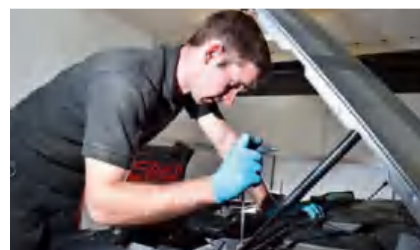


heat shield was back on, the car was lowered so Aaron could access the top of the rear damper units through the boot of the car. This entailed the removal of the boot interior; once removed the Eibach and Bilstein products bolted straight into place. New centric bolts were fitted, too. Steve rightly saw this as a good opportunity to replace the original ones so bought some with him hoping they could be fitted.



A vacuum bleeder was used to pull the brake fluid through the new pipes, then all Aaron had to do was top the fluid up in the engine. A test-drive was necessary to check for any knocking noises and to check that the feel of the car was to Aaron's high standards. Once it was clear that all was well, the car was then taken onto the four-wheel alignment machine. Here Aaron took his time adjusting and readjusting. Having spent time talking to Steve to establish what his requirements were, plus using his

vast knowledge in this area, Aaron was able to achieve the perfect setup for Steve, refining the handling, and hopefully helping fuel consumption and increasing the life of his tyres. The final touch was to reset the steering wheel to centre. The car was then taken out for a final test-drive to check everything was up to scratch. After a few last minute tweaks Matt jumped in to take his last pictures of the day. Steve finally got the keys back and judging by the grin on his face he was more than pleased.



Steve's feedback is that he is very impressed with the quality of the Eibach products – so much so that on his return to work (at another BMW independent garage) it immediately looked into becoming an Eibach dealer. The icing on the cake, though, was the alignment setup which Steve says has transformed the handling. This highlights how important when choosing a performance spring and anti-roll bar chassis upgrade to complement it with an equivalent performance alignment setup to get the very best out of your products ●





THE LONG GAME

Some folks rush through a project, hurtling towards a deadline to get everything finished. David Byrne decided to take a more casual approach to his 330Ci Sport, playing the thing like a game of chess.

Words: Daniel Bevis

Photos: Andy Starkey



The process of building a project car is a convoluted and unique thing; it's a thoroughly personal endeavour given the sheer galaxy of variables. For every element of your build, be it a set of tyres, a handbrake gaiter, a shade of paint, or a pair of seats, there are countless options awaiting your perusal on the aftermarket, and that's before you even start to think about customising things to your own specs. That, it goes without saying, is why we can always bring you such a diverse menu of morsels every month with the features we share – it's pretty much impossible for two people to build the same car. And while many of the ingredients may be common to a number of other projects, it's the unique way that they're pieced together that makes each one special.

This Laguna Seca-hued E46 is a prime example of such diversity. Sure, the notion of adding M3 and CSL parts to a non-M 3 Series is a well-trodden path, but the owner in question here, David Byrne, has basically sidestepped any semblance of influence from anyone else's project to bring to life his own unique vision of the E46 puzzle.

Now, quite a few of the cars that you see on these pages have been built on a clock – whether it's to debut at SEMA or to make it in time for a Players show, or just to work to some arbitrary timescale (a birthday, a holiday, a year after the car's purchase, you name it), people quite often have one eye on the calendar throughout in order to push them on, keep them motivated. Not so with our protagonist here – David's owned this car for the best part of a decade now, and he's casually honing and refining it at his



own pace, intent on ultimately colouring in the sketched-out vision in his head.

"I owned my first BMW for six years," he recalls. "It was a 1999 320d Saloon. I was coming from Fords and Rovers before that, and was impressed that the interior was a world apart – the quality of it, it was such a nice place to be. I needed a saloon to ferry the kids about, and I wanted something that was built to last. It turned out to be a good choice." Well, having hung on to it for that amount of time, that really speaks for itself.

"I loved the E46 so much that I started hankering after something more; I'd never modded a car before, but after the kids had grown up a bit I was able to take the plunge and buy a coupé. I couldn't afford an M3, so the 330Ci Sport was the next best thing! It was 18 months old when I bought it from a main dealer – 16k on the clock and pretty much perfect – and I didn't really have much of an idea of what to change on it at first. But then the E46zone forum started to give me some ideas..."

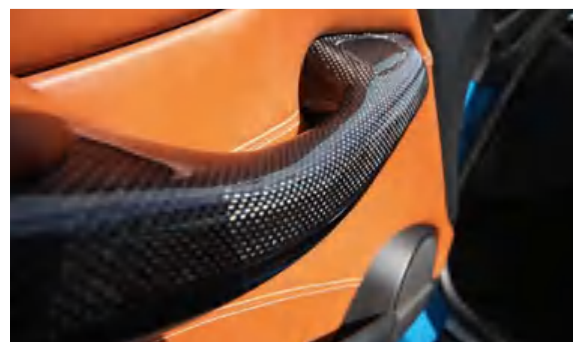
What followed, as you've probably guessed from casting an eye over the photos, was no small amount of work in transforming the 330Ci into a reasonably faithful M3 tribute, combining some CSL accoutrements and even the heady thrill of forced induction. So let's start with that last point, shall we? Sounds pretty intriguing. "Yes, well the simplest way to get the power I was after from the M54 block was to supercharge it," says David, matter-of-factly. See, he's not blowing the thing to impress people on a showground or win any pats on the back from forum members – he just wanted the thing to go faster, and identified

the best way to do it. "Having owned it for so long I knew that the engine was solid and had been looked after, so I wasn't worried about its strength. I chose the ESS system as it had been proven as a reliable OEM-looking solution, and it has exhaustively tested its 'charger' on a track car which has run over 50k miles and is still going strong, so that's good enough for me! There are also many ESS chargers out in the wild and it has a great reputation. The standard map it has is pretty good too, although I am considering a custom map in the future..."

The car's been dyno'd at over 400hp at the flywheel, which is a healthy lift over the straight-six's stock grunt, and this is all helped along by some lumpier Schrick cams, E36 M3 Evo high-flow manifolds that have been custom-matched to the motor, and a variety of other tasty tweaks. To help get all of this new power down to the road, David's had a Quaife LSD installed, which should help to tame the whirlwind somewhat. Although a power figure that begins with a four is always going to be a handful – we bet that David's got a grin like a Cheshire cat when he fully unleashes the beast.

This is a holistic build, however, it's not just about the meat under the bonnet. The exterior has been treated to all manner of M3-derived embellishments, centring around the genuine OEM M3 front wings and rear quarters, which are artfully complemented by the correct side skirts, bonnet and rear bumper, along with a CSL bootlid and replica CSL front bumper. "That bootlid should have been standard on the M3 in my opinion, it's a work of art," he smiles.

There's also a CSL-like carbon-fibre roof,





which is no mean feat to achieve: “The original was taken off in half a day,” David explains, “and the carbon-fibre item was bonded on and left to cure over the weekend in the oven. Since the previous skin had a sunroof, the weight saving is significant!”

David's a master of subterfuge too, the modifying bug having bitten him hard. He's always ready to surprise onlookers with a subtle but fresh twist. “I have several alternative parts to put on the car to change the look and keep it fresh,” he says. “There's a set of amber and clear lights, chrome, black and colour-coded grilles, the CSL rear diffuser and original M3 diffuser, two front splitters and a single lip, plus three sets of wheels which can all be swapped around to alter the look whenever I want!”

Talk about diversity, huh? You can see how easily it is to get sucked into the parts-hoarding scene – once you've got a taste for OEM+ tuning, it becomes an obsessive pattern of searching and collecting.

As we move into the interior, we find another set of boxes ticked over the course of David's ownership, stepping incrementally toward his dream E46. The whole thing's been expertly retrimmed in Cinnamon leather, silky-soft in its Porsche-sourced Nappa finery, with some oh-so on-trend Recaro Sportster CS buckets on kidney-restraining duty up front. “They're heated seats,” David boasts proudly. “They were wired in by a local firm, DJ Auto Electrics, to operate with the OEM three-stage seat buttons.” It's this sort of attention to detail that made the build stand out for us, and we're not the only ones – David's fastidiousness has won his car a lot of fans online. Not that he built it for them, of course.

It goes without saying that the car sits perfectly too – the combination of HSD Mono coilovers and OEM CSL wheels work on a number of levels, the lightweight 19s looking just-so with those genuine M3 body corners. The fact that it's all slathered in a

striking shade of blue – the connoisseur's choice, some may say, and an option box seldom ticked – serves to highlight the obsessive nature of how the various upgraded parts have been pieced together.

Given that he's been at it for nine years, then, are we seeing the finished product? Is this the end of the road? Is he done? No, of course not. “I'm keeping this car for life,” he says. “And I've got a few plans for it yet... possibly a custom exhaust system, a TS3 upgrade to the supercharger, a Redish subframe reinforcement kit. There's plenty more in store.”

We can be sure that the quality will be absolutely top notch, naturally, and it's a fairly safe bet that he'll be buying two or three options for whatever he decides to change. You know, just to keep us all on our toes. One thing that's totally certain, however, is that he'll be taking his time over it, doing everything very thoughtfully. Nine years? Hell, he's just warming up... ●



SUPERCHARGED E46 330Ci

ENGINE & TRANSMISSION

3.0-litre straight-six M54B30, ESS TS2+ supercharger, Schrick 248/256 cams, VANOS anti-rattle kit, E36 M3 Evo high flow headers (custom flange fitted for M54 block), DEI titanium heat wrap, custom de-cat centre section, Umnitza quad exhaust with Eurostyle M3 tips, OEM Performance filter, carbon-fibre air intake, cooling system replaced, AFR wideband meter, discreet P3 vent gauge for AFR and OBD II readout. Six-speed manual, CDV delete, clutch stop mod, UCC short-shift and DSSR, Quaife LSD with diff polybushes, diff and transmission oil replaced with Redline

CHASSIS

8.5x19" ET44 (front) and 9.5x19" ET27 (rear) OEM M3 CSL wheels with Michelin Pilot Sport tyres (alternative wheels: gunmetal grey 359 reps or Volk TE37s), HSD Mono coilovers, Powerflex front bushes, OEM M3 27mm front and convertible 20mm rear anti-roll bars, OEM Performance carbon-fibre strut brace, Powerflex ARB bushes, Purple Label shorter steering rack, K-Sport eight-pot BBK with EBC BlueStuff pads

EXTERIOR

Laguna Seca blue, Evolve carbon-fibre 1x1 weave roof, OEM M3 rear quarters, OEM M3 wings, side

skirts, CSL bootlid, bonnet and rear bumper, Status Gruppe CSL 1x1 weave carbon-fibre diffuser, M3 diffuser, M3 door mirrors, Turner Motorsport replica CSL front bumper, single carbon-fibre lip and splitters, modified Japanese numberplate holder, Umnitza LED angel eyes, LED rear amber lights, OEM amber indicators, face-lift rear lights, E9x puddle lights in door handles, boot opening spring kit

INTERIOR

Recaro Sportster CS Cross heated seats (backs painted gloss black), full retrim in Cinnamon Nappa leather, M3 instrument cluster, CSL door kick strips, M3 rear view mirror, 1x1 carbon-fibre trim, Dynavin N6 media/sat-nav system, DAB radio, Freeview TV, Storm Motorwerks gear knob, handbrake and sat-nav knobs, steering wheel re-covered in Alcantara, CSL lower trim (Titanium Shadow), Alcantara gear and brake gaiters, retrofit boot release, AC Schnitzer mats, cup holders, Rainbow speakers (front and rear), Blacksyst dual-channel GPS dash-cam

THANKS

K&G Bodyshop in Cannock, Midland VW in Cannock, Dave Haden Upholstery in Walsall Wood, Xtreme Stainless, in Hixon, DJ Auto Electrics in Cannock

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BODY BUILDING

Vorsteiner knows how to build a neck-snapping show car, as its audacious M4 so ably demonstrates.

Words: Tony Saggu Photos: Andy Tipping



On any given afternoon, depending on your perspective, the drive down to Los Angeles from the suburbs is either mind-numbingly monotonous motoring purgatory interspersed with flashes of near death near misses or a positively delightful adventure filled with sights and sounds to thrill and captivate car connoisseurs of all persuasions. LA flaunts her title as the car capital of the world, offering up an eclectic display of automotive machinery pulled straight from the daydreams and wish lists of car enthusiasts the world over. A sea of raging bulls and prancing horses jockey for attention with all manner of Stuttgart studs, flying spurs, Tri-Stars and Roundels. Even freeway gridlock

can become spectacular static car show, if you see your glass as half full.

The down side is that owning an exotic supercar or thoroughbred sports sedan in the City of Angels soon loses its cachet. Exclusivity quickly evaporates in the California summer sunshine. Familiarity has bred a contemptuous disinterest among the great unwashed, they've seen these cookies cut the same way far too many times before. You need to drive something a little out of the ordinary to catch the eye of the locals, and it'll need to be pretty special to hold their interest. That's where the talented team at Vorsteiner come in. With over a decade in the business of serving up speed and style from their Southern California auto dream factory, the Orange County customising

collective knows what it takes to drop jaws and blow socks clean off. The firm has carved out a pretty enviable reputation for designing and producing all manner of hardware for a select few vehicles, the kind of cars normally owned by chaps who don't fly economy class and wear watches that cost a touch more than a modest flat in Bayswater. Fortunately the company has a particular soft spot for BMWs. Rethinking and redesigning Beemer bodywork is its core business in fact and history has shown it's pretty damn good at it.

As well as the skirts and spoilers many other tuners turn out, Vorsteiner has made a name for itself building fat fenders and wide arches. In fact, some of the most aggressively beautiful full-figured hardware to carry a





Roundel on the boot in recent times also carries the now familiar V sign, too.

Following up on the success of the M3, when BMW M GmbH announced in late 2013 that it would be offering a new F82 M4 model, Vorsteiner immediately put its name on the list to acquire one of the first few coupés destined for US shores. The designers' brief was to create a finished product that gave a nod to the car's M Power racing heritage. Giving it all the presence and character of a classic track terror while accentuating the car's natural body lines, this was not going to be an exercise in strapping on a quartet of box arches on a showroom model. Complete functionality was another stated aim. Vorsteiner doesn't pretend the conversion is a performance-maximising all-out speed venture; it does, however, maintain that the makeover, despite its uniquely aggressive styling and glorious girth, retains the functionality and drivability of the base car.

Perhaps equally as remarkable as the car's extraordinary appearance is the fact that the colossal conversion, from stock to stunning, took a scant three weeks to complete! BMW

delivered the car to the firm in mid-October, 2014; Vorsteiner's extensive makeover was designed, produced, fitted, painted and finished for its debut at SEMA in early November. Job one on the new GTRS4 conversion was to brainstorm ideas among the design team and distil the various thoughts into one final vision; this could then be sketched and put on paper. Ten years in the creative customising game has ensured that the firm now has all the latest toys in-house: Blue Light Laser Technology was employed to scan every inch of the new M car, CAD and CNC magic then effectively transformed the sketched rendering into actual prototype body panels that could be fitted to the M. Vorsteiner insisted that a great deal of redevelopment and redesigning of the kit occurred along the way; extensive life-sized clay modelling by the design team added a hands-on human dimension to form the panels to perfection. All the new panels are, in keeping with BMW's own vision for the M4, constructed of lightweight carbon composite materials. Adding seven inches to the width of the rear of the car could have gone very wrong very quickly; we've seen far too many



myopically modified motors with acres of fibreglass riveted to the sides claiming to be cool. While the wide-body treatment doesn't tickle everyone's fancy, we reckon the team has walked the line between elegant and insane pretty damn well. The rear archwork flows into a widened and redesigned rear bumper which carries an integrated diffuser, separation of colour and texture along with the addition of a quartet of polished pipes. The front fenders by comparison received a mere two inches of extra girth each. Those vents and scoops are not just for looks; the size, shape and placement of the openings have been carefully calculated to provide optimal cooling for the brakes and smooth airflow through the panels and past the car. A deep splitter comes integrated into the redesigned front bumper with plenty of extra ventilation supplied by extra grillwork.

The finishing touch to the wide-body treatment was to refinish the shell in a few coats of the original BMW Austin yellow, a colour which Vorsteiner insist was no afterthought; attention-grabbing was the name of the game and black, white or silver just wasn't going to get the job done.

With daily drivability in mind and about a foot of rubber to hide seamlessly under the arches at each corner, some sophisticated suspension was called for. Bags and switches were the natural choice and the guys at nearby Boden Autohaus in Costa Mesa made it happen. The air affair is based around an

Accuair E-Level system with a few custom touches. A brace of Viair compressors feed a five-gallon tank which distributes air through quarter-inch lines to custom bags at each corner. Bilstein struts handle damping duties. Full continuous control of ride height and driving characteristics ensures even spirited driving doesn't introduce carbon to rubber or oilpan to pavement. The M4 is no shrinking violet in the horsepower stakes straight-out-of-the-box but if you're going to dress up a project car in street fighting attire, a little increase in pony power would seem to be a good idea. Vorsteiner has kept things fairly restrained with an ESS E-tronic remap, a multi-channel controller integrates RPM and MAF providing seamless and continuous control over boost and fuel across the rev range. The upshot of all the clever electronics and laptop engineering is a healthy 550 horsepower to spin those 13.5" rear rollers. Despite the model only being weeks on the market Innotech Performance Exhaust (IPE) reportedly already had an M4 cat-back system on its shelf. With hours to spare before the car was to be loaded aboard for its trip to the country's biggest aftermarket extravaganza, the boys at GT Auto Concepts bolted up the tubular finery.

For 'Angelinos', Americans in general and Beemerphiles across the world, Vorsteiner's work delivers extravagance with sophistication and exclusivity with taste... a rare mix ●

F82 M4

ENGINE & TRANSMISSION

3.0 litre twin-turbo straight-six S55B30, ESS E-Tronic, Innotech Performance Exhaust (IPE) cat-back exhaust, Vorsteiner 90mm quad exhaust tip finishers (options: brushed/diamond black), 7-speed M DCT gearbox

CHASSIS

10.5x20" (front) and 13.5x20" (rear) Vorsteiner GTRS4 forged three-piece wheels in Gloss Brushed Shadow finish with 275/30 (front) and 345/25 (rear) tyres, Accuair E-Level airbag system, Bilstein dampers, Viair compressors

EXTERIOR

Full GTRS4 carbon composite wide-body, carbon fibre front bumper with an integrated front splitter element, carbon fibre wide front arches with ventilation (two inches wider each side), carbon fibre aero side blade elements, carbon fibre wide rear arches (3.5 inches wider each side), carbon fibre rear bumper with integrated rear diffuser element

INTERIOR

Vorsteiner embroidered coloured floor and trunk mat set, Vorsteiner chrome trunk badging

THANKS

Accuair, Boden Autohaus, Innotech Performance Exhaust (IPE), GT Auto Concepts.
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This is Tom Lilico's first BMW, but he's not pulling any punches – killer stance, unique styling, Lamborghini rims... this sleek Z3 is a true knockout.

Words: Daniel Bevis

Photos: Matt Woods





It's a well-documented fact that moths are drawn to sources of light. They just can't get enough of it, the flappy little lunatics. The scientific reason is down to a thing called phototaxis – they just have a biological imperative to gravitate toward your porch light, campfire or headlamps. Why they don't just come out in the daytime if they're so damned keen on light is anybody's guess. But the point is that it serves us humans with a useful simile: 'like a moth to a flame'.

This handy phrase applies rather neatly to Tom Lilico, the owner of this Z3, and the manner in which he was drawn into the BMW scene. You see, like so many feature car owners we shoot the breeze with, he migrated over from another level of the automotive strata entirely; his fledgling passions lay with French cars, until the shining beacon of the Bavarian propeller lured him inexorably into the warmth of its embrace (you know, if one can be said to embrace a warm propeller. Frankly, we wouldn't recommend that).

"I previously had a purple Peugeot 106, which was highly modified," Tom explains. "It was lowered on Gaz coilovers, it had a nice paint job and some lovely Schmidt TH Lines, and a GTI engine conversion. I was really into French hatches, but my automotive interests have grown a lot; I really respect older BMWs such as the 2002s and E21s, and I also love the new M3 – it was seeing a low Z3 on coilovers that inspired me to make the change. I wanted a two-seater as my 106 only had two seats – I figured if you don't use back seats, why have them? And I liked the classic sports car lines

of the Z3, so it stemmed from there."

Tom's initial plan was to seek out a Z3 Coupé, but the prohibitive price premiums they command steered him naturally toward the Roadster. A nationwide search turned up a surprisingly small number of Z3s that were quite to his tastes – and there's a lot of them out there, so this tells you something about how much of a perfectionist Tom is – and he ended up travelling a few hundred miles to check out an Estoril blue example at a dealership in Maidenhead. A few stone chips and scratches were counterpointed by a solid service history and low mileage, so the search was done and dusted.

"It wasn't a Coupé, but I still loved that it was a two-seater, with rear-wheel drive, a six-cylinder motor, and the luxury of a BMW," he says. "I was originally after the 2.2-litre model, but I'm glad I ended up with the 3.0." This makes sense, of course, as the M54B30 serves up the thick end of 231hp exactly in stock form and features a lot of aluminium so, on paper at least, the Z3 3.0 isn't as nose-heavy as you may think. As quick as his 106 may have been, this new acquisition was on another level of performance.

"After lowering my previous car on some nice wide wheels, I wanted my Z3 to be lowered as well," Tom assures us, "and I bought the car with the intention of modifying it. I was keen on the idea of lowering something that was already designed to be a low-down sports car. So the first thing I wanted to do was to invest in some nice split-rims and coilovers."

That plan, however, didn't last long. Having done his research and found a lot of examples of low Z3s on coilovers, Tom was

"It's the hard-top that I like the most. It gives it an ultra-rare look that few Z3s in the world can boast"

adamant that he wanted to create the lowest and widest possible look for his project. And so his thoughts naturally began to take in other options; he'd never had a car with air-ride before, but this seemed like the perfect time to take the plunge. "It's more practical, plus it gets the car lower," he says matter-of-factly, and you can't really argue with the logic of that. So the car was shipped off to the enthusiastic modifiers at UnitSixteen in Newton Aycliffe, where an eager chap named Jamie set about installing a custom air-ride system, along with smoothing the bootlid for good measure.

So the build was off to a promising start – it was sitting on the floor, and the beginnings of a custom aesthetic were showing themselves. You know what they say about smoothed boots: they're a gateway drug. Once you've smoothed one thing, you can't help but smooth all the



Fitment is on point and attention to detail is to die for; M54 has been treated to a few mild tweaks, including a remap, M52 exhaust manifolds and custom exhaust, meaning a bit more power and plenty more noise



things... but we'll return to the bodywork later. First, let's talk about what's going on under the arches: "I sourced a set of OZ Breytons from Ireland, which I refurbished and colour-coded to match the Estoril blue," Tom recalls. "They were 17" in diameter, which worked out nicely with the air-ride – I wouldn't have been able to get it anywhere near as low over 17s on coils. There are custom top mounts and rear mounts, and the arches have been rolled to accommodate the width, so it all sits just-so."

You'll have noticed, of course, that it's not rolling Breytons any more. In fact, those wheels appear to have a certain Sant'Agatese bull in the centre, don't they...? "I decided at some point that I fancied a change from the Breytons," he shrugs, "and was torn between a set of BBS RS and some Lamborghini Diablo wheels." His nonchalance at this point is off the

charts, it's truly impressive to watch.

"Having discovered that the Lambo rims were both 35-bolt and 5x120 PCD, I was sold on the idea. They're a more desirable and unusual choice! So after selling the Breyton faces, I bought a set of genuine Diablo faces from Poland, which were then built up using the OZ barrels from the Breytons, with wider lips added." There's a nice sense of continuity to this, as OZ was the original-equipment manufacturer of Diablo wheels in the first place, and Tom's put his own unique spin on them by face-mounting the centres and adding 3" lips up front, with a mighty 4.5" out back.

Returning to the notion of smoothness, you'll observe that the over-arching approach to exterior modifications is to shave, fill and smooth to an almost cartoonish degree, eliminating any unnecessary complexity from the overall





form and allowing that gorgeous shade of blue plenty of room to breathe. The cabin is adorned with a custom-made Hamann hard-top, sourced from Fiercespeed in California, which is complemented by M side grilles that have had their M badges smoothed away (the sort of detail that only true BMW nerds would clock), and lavish smoothing to the bonnet, aerial, side repeaters and front bumper. The rear numberplate recess has been shortened too – again, it's the little things that make the big differences, and this is something that's time-consuming to do but would pass unnoticed for most. A treat for the connoisseurs, and something emblematic of a truly passionate build.

This Z3 isn't all about the aesthetics, however. With that 3.0-litre six under the languorous hood it certainly isn't wanting for grunt, and Tom's augmented this with a robust remap courtesy of Automark in Stokesley which, working in conjunction with the cat-less M52 exhaust manifolds, custom stainless steel pipes and Pipercross air filter, adds up to an entertaining 249hp and 260lb ft. It sounds apocalyptic too, shouting through those quad tails like a caged rhino. There's aggression in spades here.

The interior is a more sober affair, but this is intentional. "I like the retro look of the dials on this era of BMW," he says, "and it's got a classic look inside. But I have

brightened it up with a mahogany Grip Royal steering wheel with quick-release, and UnitSixteen fitted a boot-popper button to the console as well as tucking the air-ride controls into the ashtray." A pleasant place to be, and an interesting counterpoint to both the aggression of the performance and the badassery of the aesthetics.

So, what is Tom's favourite element of the build? The Tarmac-troubling aired-out stance, the bona fide supercar wheels, the glimmering paintwork on the ridge-free surfaces? "Actually, it's the hard-top that I like the most," he grins. "It gives it an ultra-rare look that few Z3s in the world can boast – it's rarer to see a Roadster with a Hamann

roof than it is to see a Coupé, that's for sure! I like the way the roll hoops fit neatly in its bulges so that it can sit lower than an OEM hard-top would, it's smooth and low and blue and suits the car perfectly."

Smooth, low and blue are indeed the key take-out points from this Z3, and it's all testament to Tom's single-mindedness in his pursuit for perfection. Like the proverbial moth, he was drawn into the light of BMW ownership, and has been fluttering around the candle of uniqueness ever since. And you know what? He's whispering sweet nothings about fitting a supercharger to it next; that'll give those spinning Lamborghini bulls something to think about ●

E36/7 Z3 Roadster 3.0i

ENGINE & TRANSMISSION

3.0-litre straight-six M54B30, ECU remap, custom stainless steel quad-exit exhaust, M52 exhaust manifolds, Pipercross air filter, five-speed manual

CHASSIS

10x17" (front) and 11.5x17" (rear) custom split-rims with face-mounted OZ Lamborghini Diablo centres with 215/40 (front) and 245/40 (rear) tyres, stud adaptors with gold nuts, custom air-ride system comprising Air Lift bags and AccuAir management

EXTERIOR

Smoothed front bumper, side repeaters, bootlid, side

grilles, aerial and bonnet badge recess, shortened rear number plate recess, colour-coded Hamann hardtop and door handles, black kidney grilles, rolled arches

INTERIOR

Grip Royal quick-release steering wheel

THANKS

I would like to thank Jamie at UnitSixteen for supplying and fitting the air-ride and for the brilliant paint job, my girlfriend Gabby for helping me out, Mark at Automark for the awesome map, and Fiercespeed in California for sourcing me the rare Hamann hard-top

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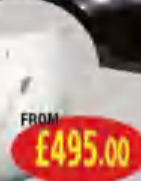
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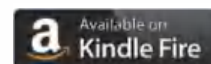
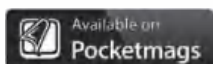
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Words: Iain Curry Photos: Matt Petrie

FIRE & ICE

These E92 M3 evil twins show how even special editions can benefit from a good dose of modifying.



Is there anything more irritating than people with vast sums of disposable income and have no clue what to do with it? You know, the multi-millionaire lottery winner who continues living in a mouldy council flat and doing factory night shifts, or the CEO that's in it only for the 'challenge' of business and still wears awful clothes and drives around in a battered old Ford despite untold wealth?

Then there's the other extreme. The guy who spends his hard-earned in such a manner that we car enthusiasts can only nod our head, shake his hand and – somewhat enviously of course – agree we'd be doing exactly the same in their shoes. Who really needs two E92 M3s? Well, given the financial means wouldn't you?

This brace of modified M3s belong to New Jersey's Bill Jordan, business owner of Miraj Corporation which manufactures and distributes aircraft replacement parts. And it seems business is good for the 47-year-old American car enthusiast. Beside the M3s in his current line-up is an Alpina B6, a Porsche 911 GT3, a Ferrari F430 Spyder, a Maserati GranCabrio, a bonkers Mercedes G63 AMG and a Mercedes CLA45 AMG, most receiving a decent dash of modifying too.

The man clearly has a passion for European exotica, and has good history with BMWs too, with an E39 540i, E38 740iL and E65 745Li in his previous inventory. But the lure of special edition M3s has stoked his fire in recent years, with the orange car a 2013 USA-only model called the Lime Rock

Park Edition, and the black one a 2011 USA-only special called the Frozen Black Edition.

The Lime Rock car is one of 200 built and finished in the Euro-only M3 GTS Fire orange paint, and came with the Competition Package, an Alcantara flat bottom steering wheel, a carbon leather dash, carbon body flashes and a lightweight titanium exhaust. The Frozen Black is an even scarcer one of just 20 built and came with matt black paint, Competition package, red stitching for the cabin, red brake calipers and 19" Gloss black competition wheels.

Both are special cars, but clearly not special enough for Bill. Each M3 has been treated to an extensive makeover to meet his preferences; including replacing some of the factory special components that already

“When I saw the Fire orange Lime Rock Park Edition I fell in love with the colour”





E92 M3 Lime Rock Park Edition

ENGINE & TRANSMISSION

4.0-litre V8 S65B40, ESS VT2-625 supercharger with custom painted Fire orange manifold, Evolve Automotive E-Tronic valved exhaust with AutoCouture Motoring test pipes, seven-speed M DCT gearbox

CHASSIS

9x19" (front) and 10x19" (rear) BBS RI-D five-spoke wheels in matt black with 245/35 (front) and 295/30 (rear) Falken Azenis 453 tyres, Öhlins Road & Track coilover suspension, Dinan carbon fibre strut braces, Brembo GT Big Brake Kit with 380mm discs and six-piston calipers (front) and 355mm four-pistons (rear) custom finished in Fire orange

EXTERIOR

Manhart Racing carbon fibre body kit including full carbon bonnet with Fire orange paint scheme and exposed carbon, carbon side skirts and fender flares, Vorsteiner GTS-V front bumper with carbon fibre lip and inserts, carbon fibre grille surrounds and side markers, OEM carbon fibre mirror covers, DownForce USA three-piece carbon rear diffuser, BC carbon fibre GTS wing and BMW painted bootlid spoiler, Fire orange body paint

INTERIOR

BMW Performance Alcantara front seats custom finished with Fire orange Alcantara and painted accents, Nexon Motors carbon fibre steering wheel with Fire orange trim and custom DCT paddles, Pedal Haus custom pedals and heel plate, custom Alcantara door panels with orange diamond stitching, carbon fibre dash and door trim with Fire orange accents, Fire orange upper front/rear door trim, painted centre and rear consoles, front and rear seatbelts and rear seat inserts, orange illuminated door sills.

THANKS

AutoCouture Motoring of Fairlawn NJ (for the build) and Ind. Distribution (for parts support)



DATA FILE

E92 M3 Frozen Black Edition

ENGINE & TRANSMISSION

4.0-litre V8 S65B40, ESS VT2-625 supercharger kit featuring custom Melbourne red with silver metallic flake manifold, Innotech IPE F1 valved race exhaust, ACM-R upgraded coolant pump and lines, seven-speed M DCT gearbox

CHASSIS

9x20" (front) and 10.5x20" (rear) Morr VS54 monoforged wheels finished in a brushed dark tinted matt clear with 245/35 (front) and 275/30 (rear) Hankook Ventus V12 tyres, Bilstein B16 DampTronic electronic adjustable active suspension, Brembo GT big brake kit with 380mm discs and six-piston calipers (front) and 355mm four-pistons (rear) custom finished in Melbourne red with silver metallic flake and black chrome decals

EXTERIOR

RKP GT4 carbon fibre front lip finished with satin/matt clear and Melbourne red CRT stripe, BMW Performance carbon fibre boot spoiler with satin/matt clear and Melbourne red CRT stripe, Varis Racing upper/lower rear diffuser in satin/matt clear, Gintani carbon fibre side skirts in satin/matt clear, LightWerkz custom headlights with Melbourne red film, matt black paint with metallic flakes

INTERIOR

BMW Performance seats with red stitching and Melbourne red painted seat backs, red front and rear seatbelts, carbon leather dash trim with red stitching, Melbourne red upper door trim front and rear, Nexon Motors carbon fibre steering wheel with Melbourne red accents and custom DCT paddle shifters

THANKS

AutoCouture Motoring of Fairlawn NJ (for the build) and Ind. Distribution (for parts support)





“We respect the factory setup but try to improve on things in terms of performance, sound and cosmetics”

made these cars stand out from the rest. The results, as you can see, are two M3s with levels of extrovertness and hardcore racing style to have you drooling.

“I am a big fan of the S65 V8 engine – one of the best ever made by BMW and with that beautiful sound,” Bill said. “When I saw the Fire orange Lime Rock Park Edition I fell in love with the colour and possibilities to really take it to the extreme with all of the products available like superchargers, body kits and suspension, but still keep it a daily driver. I found the Frozen Black Edition by happy accident one night online. It only had 300 miles on it, and although I wasn’t planning on buying a second E92 M3, when I went to see it I fell in love and bought it that day. It looked menacing and had really nice red accents that I picked up for the customisation project.”

Bill’s motivation for modifying is typical, namely taking factory cars and adding his personal touches so they are unique. He said everything done on the special M3s is reversible: “We respect the factory setup but try to improve on things in terms of performance, sound and cosmetics. There’s also an enjoyment in building up these cars in such a way that they can compete with so-called supercars costing three to four times the price.”

Build work has been done by AutoCouture Motoring of Fairlawn close to Bill’s New Jersey home; a BMW specialist he says is regarded as one of the leading performance and custom shops in the USA. “The staff are real enthusiasts, and I make a point to stop by there on my way home from work to catch up on new builds, product trends and hang out with a great bunch of

guys,” he said. Some custom parts are provided by AutoCouture, and the rest from another well-followed BMW specialist, Ind. Distribution.

Two tougher looking, beautifully stanced E92 M3s would be hard to find. And there’s the upping in performance to back the looks. Both cars have been given ESS superchargers, the main benefit of which is a significant boost to low end torque, as this is Bill’s only complaint of the S65 factory motor. “With the kits, rear-wheel horsepower is now 550hp and torque at 350lb ft, so essentially they have the power to run with the current generation stock M3/M4 turbo cars.”

Anyone who’s driven the F80/F82 cars knows they’re incredible weapons, but the turbo six-cylinders just don’t have the emotive roar of the previous generation



V8s. So Bill's passion for the model is perfectly understandable.

The style begins on the 'charged motors too. The manifolds are Melbourne red with silver metallic flake on the black car and Fire orange on the other, showing a theme that runs through both cars. Both feature BMW Performance seats (sourced through Europe as none were shipped to America), which Bill said are perfect for customising. True to his word, each car's chairs have been painted the relevant hue, and the rest of the cabin follows suit.

The orange car has orange accents for everything from the stitching in the door panels to the centre console and even all the seatbelts. The black car does almost the same but with the Melbourne red colour, while both cars now have gorgeous Nexon Motors carbon fibre steering wheels.

Body-wise things get even crazier. The Lime Rock car is a stunning mix of Manhart Racing carbon body kit, a Vorsteiner GTS-V front bumper with carbon lip, DownForce

USA three-piece carbon rear diffuser and BC carbon GTS wing just for starters, with tough-as-nails black and orange contrasting throughout. Mixing the styles up, the black car comes with RKP GT4 carbon front lip, BMW Performance carbon boot spoiler, Varis Racing rear diffuser and Gintani carbon side skirts. Most of the body additions are finished in a satin/matt clear and with a Melbourne red detail where possible. The results are breathtaking; there's little wonder that Bill and his cars are online superstars.

Now the all-important chassis. Both feature giant Brembo brake kits, hidden behind 19" BBS RI-D five-spoke rims for the orange car, and 20" Morr wheels for the black M3. The Lime Rock car is Bill's choice for any track excursions, so it now has Öhlins Road & Track coilover suspension – Bill saying they are versatile enough to still give daily drive comfort. The Frozen Black M3, being one of 20, is just too special to risk on track, especially with that matt black

paint. It now has very trick Bilstein B16 DampTronic electronic adjustable active suspension, allowing the driver to change settings on the fly.

This pair of brutally handsome M3s are both stunning builds. We can't kid ourselves that it can be done cheaply of course. Both M3s are costly special editions for starters, and the custom parts and incredible attention to detail aren't for those with shallow pockets. We can hugely respect Bill's method of spending his money, however, as he has created aspirational halo M3s justifiably envied and loved wherever they're seen.

Work is "pretty much" finished on these two E92 M3s, Bill said, but as you'd have guessed, there's something else in the pipeline. A Laguna Seca blue F82 M4 is getting the full treatment at present, despite Bill's early reservations about the turbo six's exhaust note. We're sure he'll find away around this, and can't wait to see and hear the final results ●



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Let's face it, we all love to tinker with our cars – you probably wouldn't be reading this magazine if you didn't. Whether it's a set of lowering springs, a change of wheels or something as big as an engine swap, many of us can probably claim to have worked on a few areas of our cars to improve or personalise them.

There are some people, however, who take things a step further and set out to not only personalise their cars, but take them to a level of finish far higher than they left the factory with. Pete Sidwell is one of the those people: "I bought an E46 M3 because I'd wanted one from the moment I saw them in magazines," he began. "I'd had mainly Japanese cars before, but wanted something more luxurious after running a WRX for a couple of years. It took me six months to

find the right one – I'd almost given up! I finally found one just ten miles away from my home, having travelled all over the country looking at them. I wanted a non-sunroof, non-nav, manual Coupé in Silver grey with full service history, 19s and as low a mileage as I could afford. It had just 40k on it when I got it.

"This was in July 2010, and I had the intention of mildly modifying it but then the bug bit and I couldn't stop!" smiled the 33-year-old aircraft engineer. "My initial mods were very basic, then after attending a few shows I decided that I wanted to create something more unique. I met James from Redish Motorsport in February 2012 and the car moved to a whole new level."

Up to this point, Pete had fitted a Vorsteiner V-CSL carbon fibre bumper, dropped the car on KW V3s and was running

Kawasaki Ninja green-centred BBS LMs, along with CSL rear end goodies and an Eisenmann exhaust. It was down at Redish Motorsport in Bristol that things really started to take off – James Redish dropped almost the entirety of the car's underside and disassembled it all, before sending virtually every component off for blasting and powdercoating.

After putting in an extensive order to the dealers – which included numerous screws, bolts, new wheel bearings, underside plastics and much more – Redish set about cleaning up the underneath. The all-too-common rear subframe mounting cracks were addressed with welding repairs and reinforcement plates, before the brake and fuel lines were removed and the whole underside was cleaned and re-coated with fresh seam sealer where needed and



IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

At first glance Pete Sidwell's E46 M3 is clearly something pretty special, but go in closer and this thing is just off the scale...

Words: Ben Koflach

Photos: Louis Ruff @ Definitive





underseal over the whole lot.

At this point all of the parts returned from powdercoating – Pete chose to have the rear subframe, trailing arms, diff heatsink, V-brace, engine undertray and suspension springs coated in a darker shade of the Ninja green that his wheels had been painted in, while the rear upper control arms were painted in blue to match the Hardrace adjustable lower control arms that would be going on. With new brake and fuel lines made and fitted, the rest of the refit process could begin.

As part of this process, the freshly powdercoated chassis bits were fitted with polybushes, including Powerflex subframe and front control arm bushes along with Rogue Engineering rear trailing arm bushes. Then, once the fuel tank and all of the heatshields had been refitted, the subframe

was bolted in and the suspension components were added to it piece by piece. The rear control arms were attached along with the trailing arms, shocks and springs, and from there the rear hubs were built back up with new brake discs and pads, Goodridge braided flexi lines and refurbished calipers.

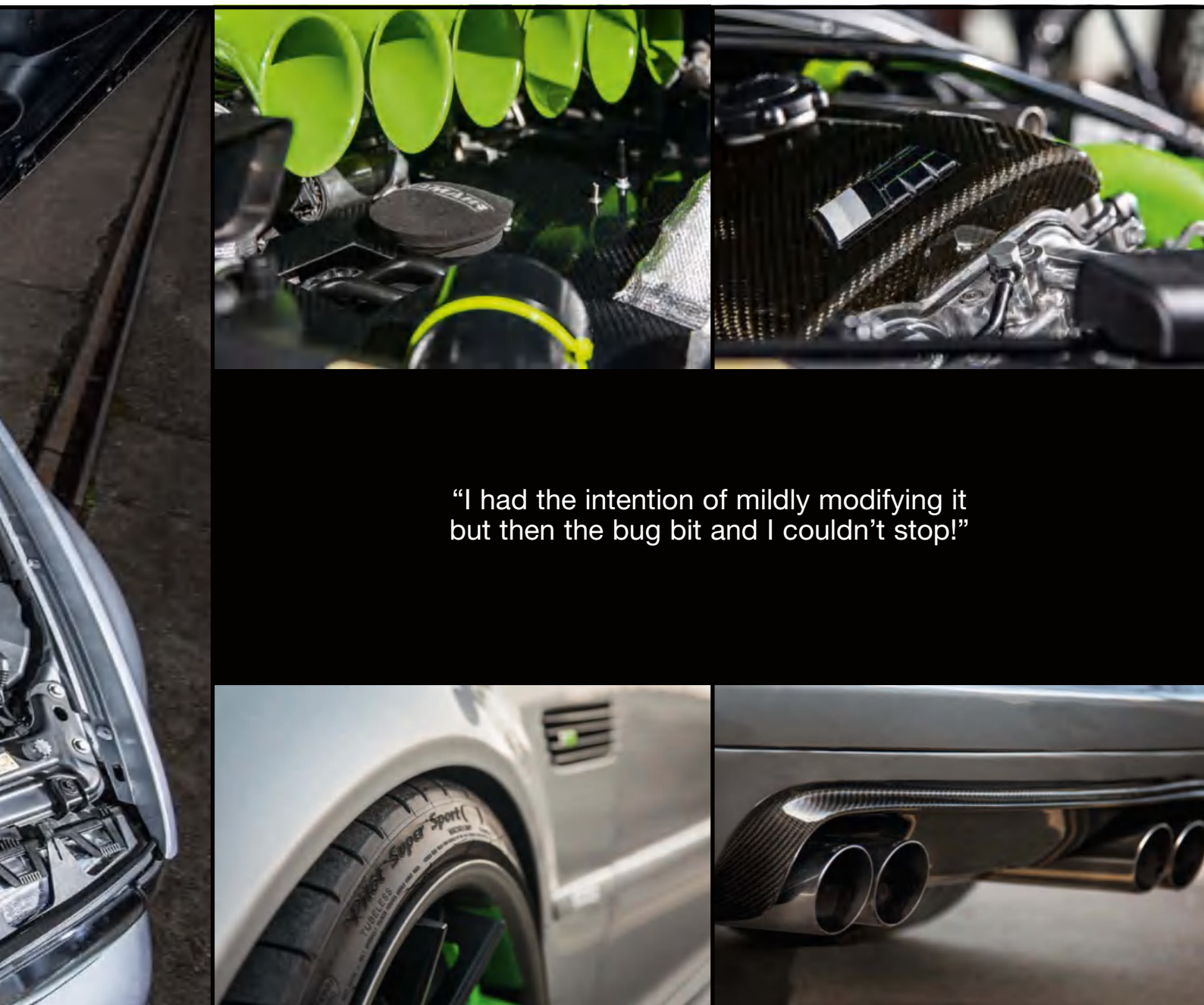
From here, the diff could be bolted back together and reinstalled along with new CVJ grease and a new joint gasket, before the newly painted driveshafts were hoisted into position too. The freshly painted anti-roll bar and brackets could then be fitted along with Powerflex bushes. Finally, the prop, exhaust heat shields and the exhaust itself could be installed, rendering the E46 far better than when it left the factory in 2004.

"It was a huge job," James Redish chipped in. "But due to Pete's excellent planning and

prep work, and our commitment to this job, it was completed in just eight days. It was a really enjoyable project and one which I won't forget in a hurry," he smiled.

Redish has gone on to offer this underside restoration service for all manner of BMWs, and its E46 M3 boot floor repair is fast becoming the industry standard – it has developed its own reinforcement plates and offers a fantastic service.

After all of the work on the underside, Pete turned his attention to the interior once more. He fitted a Storm Motorwerks titanium-plated gear knob and handbrake grip, as well as perforated leather gaiters with green stitching and had the centre armrest trimmed to match. The steering wheel was updated thanks to a full retrim by Royal Steering Wheels with perforated black leather grips, Alcantara sections and an



“I had the intention of mildly modifying it but then the bug bit and I couldn’t stop!”

oversteer marker all with green stitching. Then it was time to add some green flashes to the underbonnet area, which was done with a full complement of Samco coolant and ancillary hoses. A billet oil filter cover was fitted too, and after countless hours spent cleaning, the car was ready for its first proper show outing at Gaydon BMW Festival 2012.

“Gaydon 2012 was a bit gutting,” explained Pete. “I couldn’t get the bonnet up! We’d spent at least three full days prepping and replacing parts under there and got all of my Samco hoses fitted ready for the show, only to be let down by a faulty bonnet pin!” However, as you can imagine, the underside of the car was still well-received. Pete was far from done with the engine anyway, and in the year that followed, he worked on something that

would truly make his car unique...

First up, the secondary air pump was removed. Then, in its place, Pete plumbed in an oil catch can to stop harmful oil vapours being recirculated into the engine and was, of course, painted Kawasaki Ninja green.

The next step really stirred up some controversy, as Pete removed the velocity stacks from his OE air box, had them powdercoated in his trademark green and set about running them as open trumpets. The method of doing this is relatively simple, but to do it without losing power and as neatly as Pete has is quite something.

The key to making sure the switch to open the trumpets ran as well as possible was keeping heat out of the engine bay, and cold air going towards the intake. For this, Pete had his OEM bonnet put under the knife, with GTR style vents installed to draw

heat from underneath it. The rest of the work mostly included vents and ducts to fire cool air over the intakes.

Before mapping, the car was running pretty rich and Pete even noticed that it was shooting fire from the intakes – spectacular, but not ideal. In the interlude between finishing the mechanical side and mapping it, Pete also pressed on with a number of transmission upgrades, the parts for which he’d slowly been gathering over the period of a few months. This included a TTV ‘Lite’ flywheel, weighing just 5.1kg, along with a Stage 2 clutch (capable of handling 50% more torque than the OE clutch), Sachs non-self-adjusting pressure plate, a new clutch release bearing and a phosphor bronze pivot pin. Once that lot was bolted up along with new OE flywheel and clutch bolts, the outside of the box could be furnished with



new parts too, namely a Goodridge braided clutch line and CDV delete, Rogue Engineering transmission mounts and an E60 545i shifter, which reduces the throw by around 30% when compared to an original E46 M3 item.

"All of the transmission upgrades really worked out great," Pete smiled. "The shift is noticeably quicker, the clutch pedal feels great (although heavy), and the engine feels loads more responsive." Ah yes, back to that engine – Pete fitted a set of ITG sock filters just in time for mapping, which revealed some surprising results.

First off, Pete had reinstalled the factory air box to get a base figure from it. "I took the car to Wayne at ChipWizards in Warrington. Three base runs were laid down in the car's initial state," he commented. "We recorded a healthy 351.1hp and 277lb ft. Wayne was impressed with the figures, and it seemed consistent with the car having adapted to modifications and running cleaner air with the catch tank since it was dyno'd at 345hp by Evolve in 2012.

"Luke [from Redish Motorsport] and I

then set about stripping off all the OEM kit and bolting the stacks and filters back on, and then wiring in the Inlet Air Temperature sensor kit. Initial dyno runs with the original map and no MAF showed the car to have lost about 10hp across the rev range with some significant holes in the powerband and torque curves at about 1900 and 2600rpm. Wayne was confident that he could iron out the trouble spots and get the car running better. The ECU was reflashed with a seriously tweaked Alpha-N file, and we went from there...

"At about half 8 that evening, Wayne was still busy with the car as it was creating a few weird AFRs, so we decided to take the stacks apart and just give them a good clean. The next run then showed 389.2hp and 297lb ft of torque with no holes in the power band and it sounded unbelievable! We finally finished at about midnight, with the car driving like a dream."

With the final print-out reading as 312.4hp and 255lb ft at the wheels (the aforementioned figures being at the flywheel), Pete was understandably a happy

man. With an addiction to the new found power and induction noise, it was only a matter of time before things were stepped up a notch yet again.

"I started stockpiling parts for the next stage of my build, beginning with a Cobra Imola Pro-Fit GT bucket seat. Initially I could only run one in the car as it was my daily and I had to get the kids in the back!" Pete laughed. With this and the plans in mind, Pete's attention also turned to the chassis and braking setups once more.

First up, a set of Michelin Pilot Supersports were ordered up in CSL sizes, as Pete had new wheels in mind, and the K Sport brakes he had previously were ditched for something far more premium. "The kit I ordered was Alcon's 365mm offering with six-piston calipers – I upgraded as I intended to make my car more track-orientated."

Pete's final exterior touch – and one that shows off those Alcons even better – was a set of Quantum44 S1s in 9.5x19" sizing with staggered offsets. "I'd decided it was time for a change, and after speaking to Chris at CM Wheels we decided that the car needed

"I love how I've tied all the parts together, how it sits and handles, and the insane induction roar it makes!"



E46 M3

ENGINE

3.2-litre straight-six S54B32, custom velocity stack setup with ITG sock filters, custom carbon fibre heatshield & air temp sensor bracket, Samco intake hose boots, Ramair idle control valve filter, custom cold air feeds, Eisenmann 83mm Le Mans 'Race' exhaust, 100 cell cats, custom oil catch tank & brackets, secondary air pump delete, custom Alpha-N map with rear lambda and air pump delete, carbon fibre/kevlar engine cover with monochrome badge, Samco lime green coolant & ancillary hoses, TTV 'Lite' 5.1kg flywheel, custom flywheel bolts

TRANSMISSION

Six-speed manual gearbox, Sachs sintered four-puck clutch, Sachs ZF non-self-adjusting pressure plate, braided clutch line, CDV delete, Phosphor Bronze clutch pivot pin, E60 shift lever, Rogue Engineering transmission mounts, all new hardware

CHASSIS

9.5x19" ET40 (front) and 9.5x19" ET22 (rear) Quantum 44 S1 wheels (with matt gunmetal lips and barrels, matte black spokes with Kawasaki Ninja green detailing) with 235/35 (front) and 265/30 (rear) tyres, 12mm TPI hubcentric front spacers, 10mm H&R hubcentric rear spacers, 75mm wheel stud kit, R10 titanium wheel nuts, KW V3 coilovers with custom

painted springs and Nitron rear spring perches, Rogue Engineering rear shockmounts, KW uprated front droplinks, Hardrace adjustable rear control arms, Redish Motorsport rear subframe reinforcement, Powerflex Black Series front control arm bushes, Powerflex front anti-roll bar bushes, Rogue Engineering black rear trailing arm bushes, Powerflex rear subframe & rear anti-roll bar bushes, green powdercoating (diff carrier, rear trailing arms, diff heatsink, V brace, engine undertray), blue powdercoating (rear upper control arms), all hardware replaced with either OEM or stainless steel replacements, Alcon Advantage Extreme front big brake kit consisting of six-pot monobloc calipers with Ferodo Performance pads and 365mm discs, custom painted rear brake calipers, new steel brake lines throughout, braided hoses, ATE Super Blue fluid

EXTERIOR

Silver grey, Vorsteiner V-CSL carbon fibre front bumper with flippers, custom vented OEM bonnet with GTR style vents and custom washer vent, CSL-style rear diffuser, matt black kidneys, side grilles & mirror caps, black and white carbon fibre roundels, monochrome and Ninja green side grille badges, smoked Depo indicators, LED angel eyes with DRL and remote fade, front numberplate holder delete, driver's door lock delete, retrofitted in-car boot release, custom decals

INTERIOR

Black Nappa OEM interior, Cobra Pro-Fit GT seats with custom green stitching, custom floor mounts on driver's side, Macht Schnell mounts for passenger side, retrimmed steering wheel (with green stitching, perforated leather grips, Alcantara top and bottom pieces and grey leather oversteer marker), black and white carbon fibre steering wheel roundel, Ninja green and monochrome steering wheel M badge, Storm Motorwerks titanium-plated V2 gear knob, handbrake lever & lighter plug blank, custom gaiters & centre armrest in black perforated leather with green stitching, carbon fibre gear trim surround, custom painted matt gunmetal dash inserts, CSL doorcards with matt gunmetal inserts and matt black door handles, door airbags deleted, monochrome door sill inserts, full LED interior lighting kit, custom carbon fibre switch panel, climate control relocated, rear seat delete trimmed in grey Alcantara with all trim/wiring/speakers removed, parcel shelf and doorcards trimmed in grey Alcantara, black HK rear speaker covers, compact fire extinguisher between front seats

AUDIO

Kenwood KDC-BT92SD head unit & KAC-5205 amp, Alpine SWE 815 active subwoofer, Focal Access front component speakers, custom located iPod connection



something different and fresh!” smiled Pete. “The result was the first set of Quantum44 SIs in these sizes, custom painted to suit my car. The concave faces of the wheels are crazy – I love them – and the green detail looks immense when the car is rolling!”

Shod in those CSL-sized Michelin Pilot Cup Sports and bolted up with a wheel stud conversion, the wheels truly do set the car apart. With the Ninja green spoke detail on each wheel tying them in with the rest of the build, it has simply elevated Pete’s car to the next level.

The final step was getting the interior finished, and Pete hasn’t done things by half: “Over the next few months I managed to squeeze in plenty of modding,” he explained. “I had my Cobra buckets re-done with green stitching and fitted them. I also removed the rear seats and built a custom rear area.”

This rear part of the interior included stripping out all of the wiring and bracketry to reduce weight as much as possible, and then Pete built panelling to neaten everything up. This was trimmed in Alcantara, and the rear doorcards were given the same treatment too. Pretty much all that you’ll find in the back these days is a fire extinguisher!

The finishing touch was fitting CSL-style doorcards, using all genuine mounting parts. As they’re painted to match the wheels, they tie in perfectly: “My old carbon fibre dash inserts are gathering dust in the garage now, as I had a set of standard ones painted to match the doorcards. I also built a new carbon dash panel and located switches in it for an electric fan and eventually for an exhaust bypass valve as well as an IAT gauge and the mirror switch.

“I’m really happy with how the car is now – future plans are to retire it from daily use and make it more track-orientated with 4:10 gearing, a cage and a CAE shifter,” grinned Pete. “My current favourite parts? I just love how I’ve tied all the parts together, how it sits and handles, and most of all the insane induction roar it makes! It never fails to put a smile on my face!”

With a seriously unique appearance under the bonnet, inside the car, underneath the car and on the surface, Pete can proudly say that he owns one of, if not *the* most reworked E46 M3s in the country. Not only has he modified it extensively to suit his taste and needs, but he’s seen to it that the whole car has been enhanced in every area, rendering it better than standard. It’s come a long way, and knowing Pete, he won’t be slowing up on it anytime soon ●



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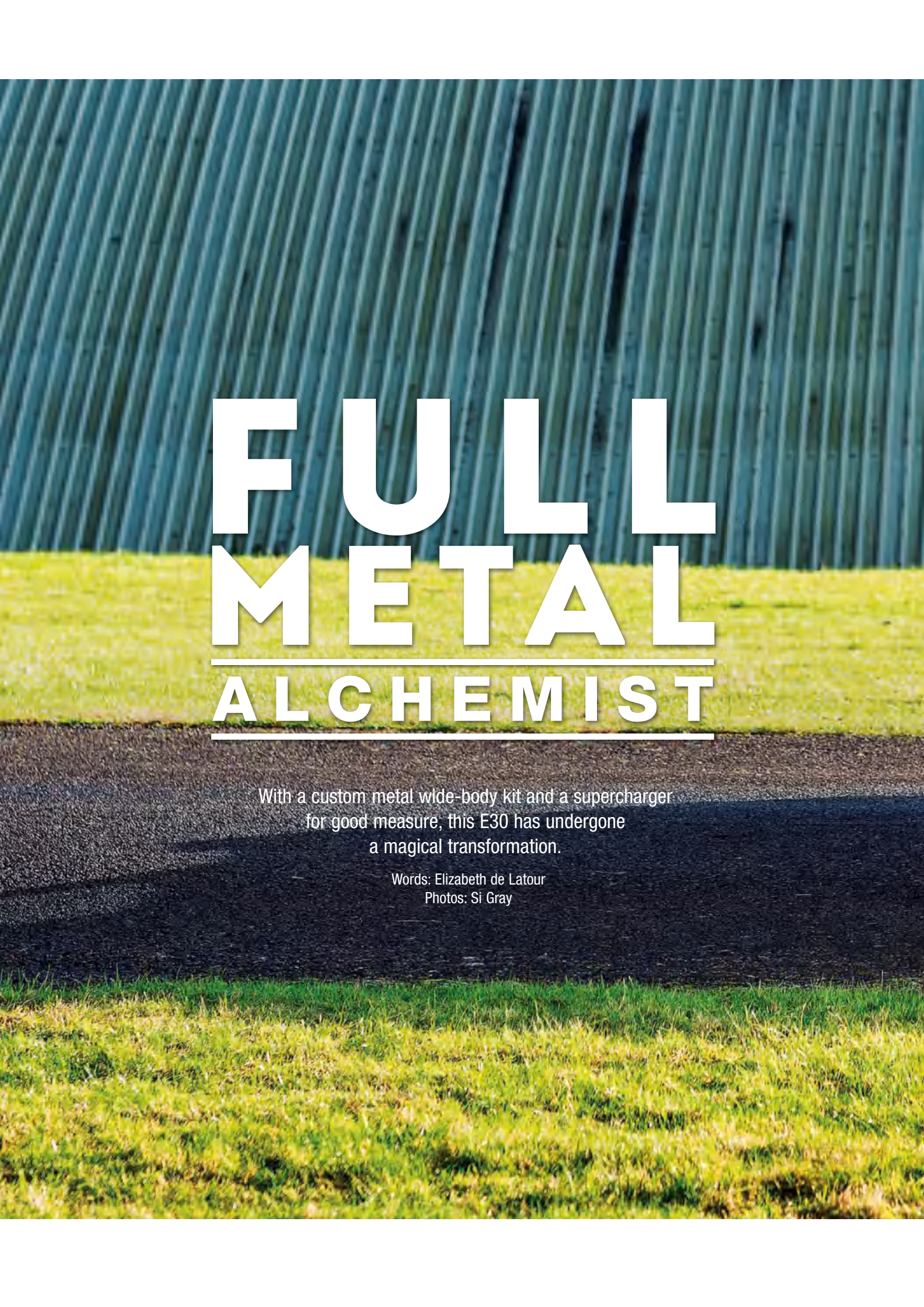


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FULL METAL

ALCHEMIST

With a custom metal wide-body kit and a supercharger for good measure, this E30 has undergone a magical transformation.

Words: Elizabeth de Latour
Photos: Si Gray





Approaching Clive King's E30 in profile causes the black paintwork to hide the incredible amount of work that's gone into creating the body. Viewed in profile it just looks like a black E30, really, but, like one of those 3D illusion sculptures, as you start to move towards the front or back of the car the reflections on its flanks begin to twist and distort and that's when you begin to realise that actually there is a lot more going on here than first meets the eye...

Incredibly, this is Clive's ninth E30, a habit he's sustained since he was 21, though he says he's been into cars since the dawn of time, which does make us question exactly how old he might be. The car you see before you was never meant to be like this. Clive bought it with the intention of turning it into a cheap sleeper but things don't always go to plan.

The story all started with the engine, which was originally in a Cab. "The engine started out as 2.5 and I built it up to a 2.7 before adding the Rotrex supercharger which was modified specifically to fit," says Clive. "It actually sits where the air-con pump would be. The engine was fantastic and made 321hp but it was a bit too lively in the Cab – there was loads of scuttle shake, it was always lighting the wheels up and even though the Cab was heavier than the other body shapes, with the engine it was just too sketchy. I wanted something else to put it in and I had the opportunity to buy this E30 shell for £70, so I did. It was supposed to be a clean, low, sleeper Chromie!"

Clearly that's not what happened and, in a roundabout sort of way, it's Clive's wife's fault, really. "These wheels," he says, pointing to his striking blue Rota RBXs, "appeared for sale on Pistonheads and I liked the retro

look, they're like big Minilites. I mentioned the fact that I liked them to my wife and she bought them for me as a surprise. When I put them on the car they stuck out. I didn't want to hurt her feelings, so I had to build some arches to fit over the wheels!

"I built the whole car at my workshop. The bumpers are fibreglass but I hand-fabricated the arches from sheet steel. I trained in bodywork but I gave it up as a job as it took away the enjoyment from my doing it as a hobby, so now I just do it for myself and my friends. The bumpers are copies of the M Tech 2 kit but they didn't fit so I bought two jigs for the bumpers and had to cut and reshape them to make them fit, then re-fibreglass them. The skirts are fibreglass copies of some Ford Granada Scorpio sideskirts I had lying around. I had to cut them, flare them out by 4" and then re-fibreglass them. The spoiler is a copy of

“The engine is absolutely flawless...
I’ve never put my foot flat to the
floor because it’s too scary”



the E30 M3 spoiler but with a carbon gurney flap added on. The bonnet I made six years ago but never finished until I built this car. I started with the standard bonnet, measured it up, made the side spacers and then welded them in."

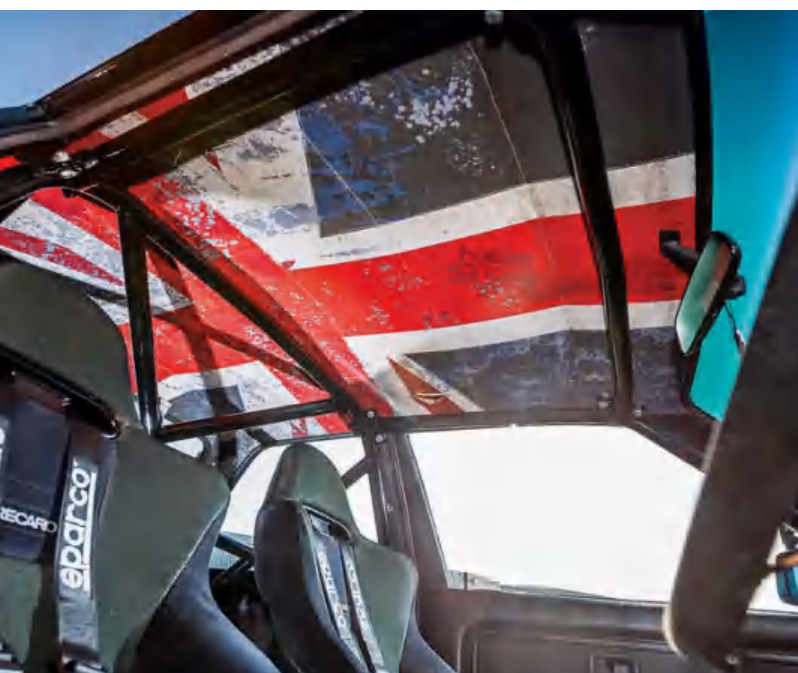
The whole car looks absolutely awesome thanks to Clive's handiwork, and while it's not going to suit all tastes you can't argue with the visual impact it delivers. The arches are a work of art, beautifully finished, smooth and rounded, quite unlike anything you normally see and only when looking down the car's flank do you get the full effect.

The interior is no less impressive and a lot of hard work has gone into making it as good as it is. The seats are from a Honda Accord Type R, which Clive's wife also bought for him, and sit on custom mounts. His verdict? "They're very comfortable," he

says. Most of the interior is taken up by the 18(!) point roll-cage and it really is quite something. "I knew I wanted a roll-cage," he says, "and I got this one from 'mrben' on the E30zone forum. I had to take it out three times while I was doing the rest of the interior though, which was a bit of a nightmare!" Clive has also de-de-skinned the sunroof and fitted a Union Jack headlining, which was actually a duvet that sacrificed itself for the greater good. Impressive as all this is, most of all we love the digital gauges in the instrument cluster. They look absolutely awesome but weren't fitted because of their appearance. "The original gauges just couldn't keep up with the engine," explains Clive, "so I went for these digital gauges from Drift Iridium." The company offers a full selection of gauges and Clive's E30 is sporting what is pretty

much the dream dash combo, with speedo, rev counter, fuel gauge and temperature all matching Drift Iridium items, with an additional boost gauge mounted in a small pod where the air vent near the door would normally be.

So to the star of the show: the engine. As we already mentioned above, it started out as a 2.5 before Clive built it up to a 2.7, which is where we pick the story up. "After I'd taken it up to 2.7 and supercharged it, the supercharger seized. It was starved of oil and the Megasquirt ECU I was running also died. I got hold of a DTA S80 Pro ECU and took the engine up to 2.8 myself, with an E36 M50 2.8 crank, M20 2.0 rods and M20 2.5 pistons and then I added the same Rotrex supercharger as before. The 2.8 was great but it blew a couple of head gaskets very badly as the compression was too high.



SUPERCHARGED WIDE-BODY E30

ENGINE & TRANSMISSION

Custom-built six-cylinder M20 2.9 stroker, Ireland Engineering forged rods, custom-spec Ross racing pistons, Cometic MLS steel head gasket, ARP bolts all-round, steel windage tray, reworked head, 264-degree custom Cat Cam, six-branch manifold, Sportex mild steel exhaust, VR6 coil packs, Magnecor HT leads, Rotrex C30-94 supercharger kit, ITG air filter, front mount intercooler, E36 radiator, Kelowe twin-speed main fan and two 8" auxiliary fans. DTA S80 Pro ECU – wiring harness traction and launch control ready, uprated injectors, urban camo Samco hose kit, 551 fuel cell, 2.51 surge tank, red top lift pump, Bosch 044 pump, twin filters, adjustable pressure regulator and braided fuel lines. Five-speed manual gearbox, Z3 short-shift, lightened flywheel with Stage 3 DriveTorque clutch, 3.64 LSD

CHASSIS

9.5x17" (front and rear) ET -19 Rota RBX wheels painted in Candy Fantasy blue with 205/45 (front) and 225/45 (rear) Maxxis Maz 1 tyres, FK High Sport coilovers, H&R adjustable roll bars, rear camber kit, M3 eccentric front bushes, Powerflex polybushes all-round, strengthened sub frames, Sparco twin-tube strut brace, Wilwood ultra-light four-pot BBK with

310mm discs (front), drilled/grooved rear, tubbed rear arches, front inner arches removed

EXTERIOR

Custom steel wide arches flared 4", hand-built side skirts, stretched M Tech 2 bumpers, custom swage lines, smoothed body, custom vented bonnet, carbon fibre boot spoiler, Startec rear lights, smoked headlights, carbon wrapped mirrors and door trims, side indicators removed, M3 bonded windscreen, sunroof panel lightened and bonded, airbrushed Union Jack/German flag on rocker cover, car finished in high gloss jet black

INTERIOR

Recaro front seats on custom mounts, rear seats removed, deep-dish steering wheel, Drift Iridium digital gauges, centre switch panel, 18-point Safety Devices roll-cage, Sparco three-point harnesses, custom Union Jack headliner

THANKS

My wife, Charlotte, Cotswold Airport (01285 771177 'Come and see us some time'), Circuit Motorsport Ltd trading as Sabre Tuning (Paul Shepherd, 01249 782596), The Engine Shed (Byron, 07788 454083), my dad for helping me and my mum for making him!



It was making 423hp but it was unreliable and while I don't use the car often, when I do I like to enjoy it so I didn't want it to keep breaking down on me.

"At this point I hit rock bottom and I really didn't know what to do. I was ready to just put a 2.5 in the car and sell it. Then my wife suggested building the best engine that I could afford so with her blessing I decided to do just that. Byron on the E30zone forum runs the Engine Shed Co. in Wales; he does brilliant work, and I spoke to him about what route I should go down. After plenty of research I turned to Ireland Engineering in California to build me the engine I wanted. I sent it the specs for the block and eight weeks later the finished product turned up on my doorstep. It's actually closer to a 2.9 than a 2.8 and the craftsmanship on the block was amazing, it was almost a shame

to put it all together and stick it in the car! I took it to Byron who built the bottom end, bored the block and matched the pistons before I added the finishing touches."

Clive set out to build the best engine he could and looking through the spec list it certainly looks like mission accomplished. There are Ireland Engineering forged rods, custom-spec Ross Racing pistons, a Cometic multi-layer steel headgasket, ARP bolts, a 264-degree custom cam from Cat Cams, along with a six-branch manifold leading to a Sportex exhaust. The boot is home to the fuel system components, with a 551 fuel cell and 2.5-litre surge tank, 'red top' lift pump, Bosch 044 pump and braided lines throughout. "The engine is absolutely flawless," says a grinning Clive. "It's making roughly 510-520hp and it's absolutely insane. I've never put my foot flat to the floor

because it's too scary." Considering that with the stripped-out interior and home-made arches it's now significantly lighter than standard, that makes 520hp an absolutely ridiculous amount of power to be running, especially when all of it is attempting to funnel its way to the Tarmac via 225 rear tyres. Clive is clearly crazy – which means he fits right in with the likes of us then, really.

As we wrap up the shoot, we ask Clive (as we always do) if there's anything else he'd like to do to the car. His answer is as decisive and absolute as everything else to do with this project. "There's nothing more to do," he states. "It's finished." Taking one last look at this E30, drinking in the curves of its outrageous arch work, the exquisitely executed interior, that masterpiece of an engine, we don't doubt it ●





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GATEBIL

MAIN EVENT 2015

Gatebil's main event never disappoints when it comes to crazy cars and general motoring awesomeness...

Words: Elizabeth de Latour

Photos: Si Gray

Gatebil isn't just a show, it actually comprises six shows that take place throughout the year in Norway and Sweden, each offering an intoxicating blend of insane cars, drifting and general motoring mayhem.

The main event is Gatebil at Rudskogen which this year took place over three days in July. The festival of all things fast offered visitors the chance to head out on the two-mile Rudskogen track, considered one of northern Europe's best circuits. During the event everything from street cars and sports cars to drift machines and Time Attack monsters pounded round the Tarmac. For the third time, Gatebil was home to the World Powerslide Championship, with 80 entrants from across the globe in a huge variety of machines all competing together to see who could take home the trophy for the most dramatic, spectacular and crowd-pleasing drifting.

Away from the track action was the exhibition area, housing more than 600 of the most spectacular show cars from all across Europe, with owners hoping to take home a trophy from one of 24 different categories, which makes us glad we weren't judging this one. The standard was incredibly high and the cars on show were incredibly varied, with everything from big power performance builds to perfectly stanced beauties. The BMW contingent was strong with some awesome cars on show.

Whether you go for one day or hit the tent and turn it into a whole weekend event, Gatebil is one of the most spectacular shows around and delivers a hit of motoring adrenaline like nothing else ●



This ferocious forced-induction E30 on Rondells was just one of the many absolutely mental machines on track





Awesome wide-arch E36 M3 slammed on Cosmis XT-206Rs looked seriously mean



Automote's seriously sexy E91 Touring on Airforce air-ride with stunning 19" three-piece VIP Modular VR15s





Left: Standard!

Above: the latest Gatebil taxi was out on track doing its best to make punters feel queasy



Look familiar? It's Daniel Larsson's V8-swapped E30 from p8 of this very issue



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In the past, virtual reality was the future. At least until we saw *The Lawnmower Man*, played on the Virtual Boy and watched Craig Charles bounding around in a leather jacket presenting *Cyberzone* on BBC Two. Cyber-what? Exactly. That is when we all realised that, actually, virtual reality was a bit crap. But in the present the virtually reality of the past is even more in the past and the virtual reality of the future is here in the present. Virtually. What we're getting at is that with the appearance of numerous VR gaming headsets and the impending arrival of Oculus Rift, we're all about getting absorbed into our games and other media and this month we're giving you the chance to get a slice of the virtual action. And, yes, we know it's nothing to do with cars but it's free and it's cool so don't moan!

We've teamed up with Freefly VR to give

you the chance to win one of its swanky smartphone VR headsets. As the description suggests, it's a headset designed to house your smartphone, or your mum's smartphone, or your mate's smartphone or any smartphone, and deliver a unique VR experience. Simply pop your smartphone in, get setup and then enjoy one of a number of VR apps, ranging from games where your head is the controller and you control the action from a true first-person perspective to 360-degree video content and, of course, the obligatory rollercoaster simulator that may or may not have you flailing your arms around and throwing up all over the coffee table and looking like an

absolute lunatic to anyone watching whilst never leaving your sofa.

With apps available for both iOS and Android, no matter what your handset of preference is, you can enjoy the Freefly VR experience and the unit's design makes it easy to fit your phone without fuss. The expensive-feeling headset easily adjusts for all head sizes ensuring your VR trip will be a comfy one and it's easy to setup and get stuck in.

For your chance to escape the monotony of the real world and spend some time in the virtual one, simply answer the question below, the answer to which can be found on the Freefly VR website ●

HOW TO ENTER

For your chance to win this month's prize simply answer the following question:

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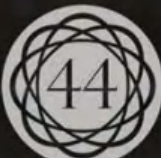


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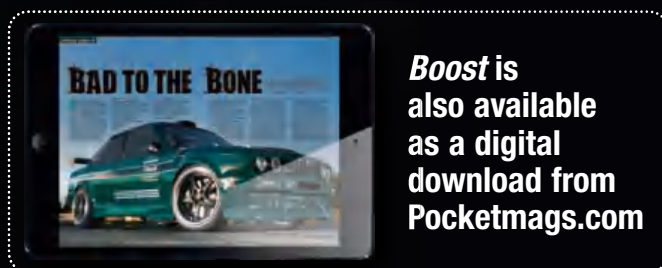
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Tech Guide

Gearboxes

Part 2

Words: Elizabeth de Latour
Photos: BMW

SMG

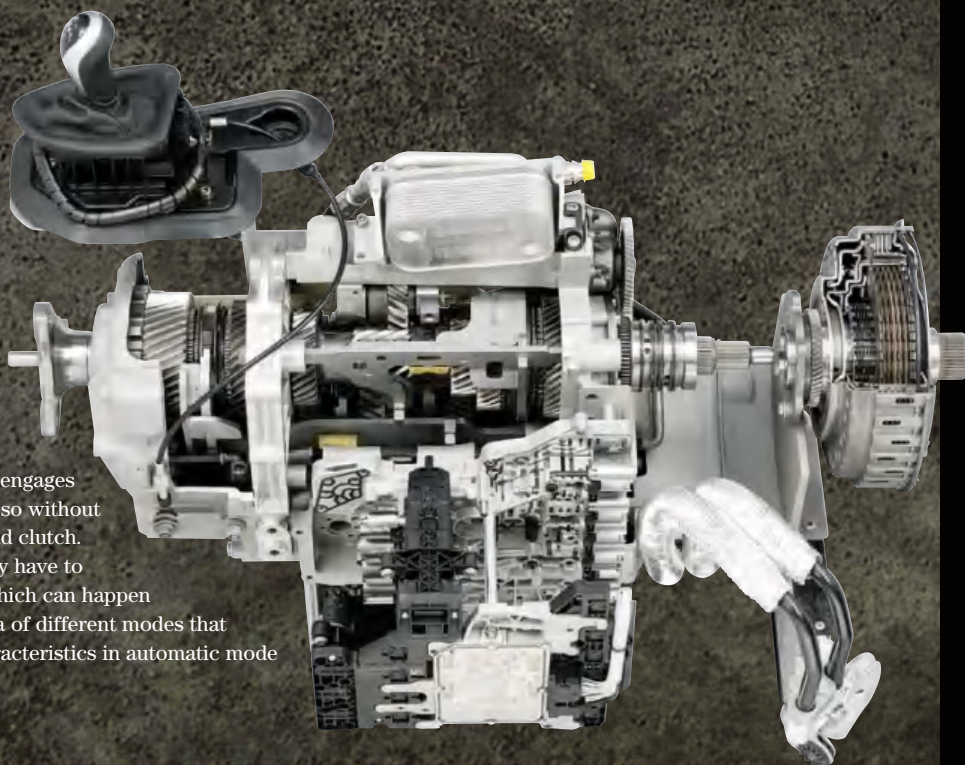
SMG, BMW's sequential manual gearbox, survived for three generations, from E36 to E60 M5 and E63 M6, before the switch was made to the M DCT gearbox. Internally, the SMG gearbox is identical to its manual gearbox counterpart, with six gears in SMG I and II, though not in the seven-speed SMG III as there was no seven-speed manual. The difference is that there isn't a torque converter fluid coupling connecting the engine to the gearbox, rather a traditional clutch assembly, but it's electro-hydraulically actuated rather

than being operated by your left foot. Come off the brake and it remains in neutral, only engaging the clutch to move off when you begin to apply the throttle; in auto mode it operates the clutch by itself while in manual mode your actions on the paddles or lever actuate the clutch. As it has to disengage and re-engage the clutch in between gear changes, like you would in a manual, gear changes don't feel 'instant' when you pull the paddle. This is why SMG can feel a little ponderous in the slower auto modes and results in the head

lolling you experience as it generally attempts to do so gently. The shifts are far more rapid in the quicker manual and auto modes, the electronics being able to operate the clutch and select the required gear in a fraction of a second, though the trade-off is the shunt you experience through the drivetrain as the clutch engages with a bang. BMW quotes a time of 65 milliseconds for a gearshift in the fastest available S6 mode, though this is just for the gear change itself, and does not include the clutch action. It's still fast though.

DCT

After SMG came M DCT Drivelogic, to give it its full name, and it represented a significant step forward over the older single clutch system. DCT stands for 'dual clutch transmission' and, as the name implies, it uses a pair of clutches, a smaller one inside of a larger one, which allows for extremely fast gear changes without interrupting the flow of power to the rear, making them virtually imperceptible. A DCT gearbox uses two separate drivetrains, each with its own clutch, one for even numbered gears, one for odd numbered gears. The gearbox essentially engages the next gear before it is selected. It is able to do so without being connected to the engine thanks to its second clutch. When you go for an upshift, the electronics simply have to disengage one clutch while engaging the other, which can happen simultaneously. As with SMG, there are a plethora of different modes that dictate how the gearbox behaves in terms of characteristics in automatic mode and shift speed both auto and manual modes ●



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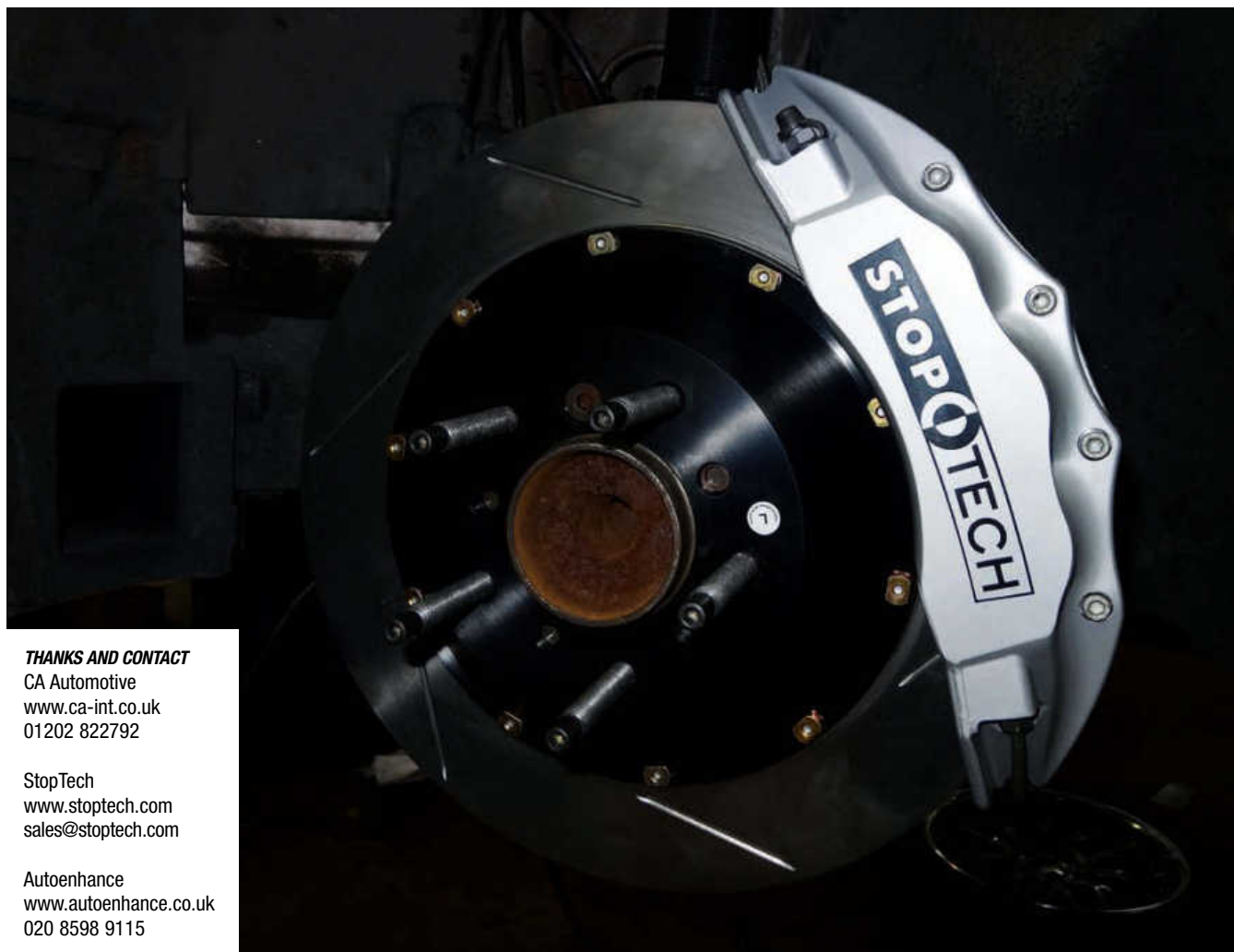
ELIZABETH'S E39 540i

Last month I left things at the point where my brakes had been fitted and I was about to take the car home. This month, having now covered a good couple of hundred miles with the StopTechs, I can actually talk about what they're like to use. Before I do that, however, we should talk about the bedding-in procedure.

In order to get the brakes ready for serious use, every BBK needs to be bedded-in first – some people will try and tell you there's no need for this and it can be quite difficult to find the space to do it, but with the StopTechs I wanted to make sure they were properly primed and ready for use. The instructions called for a series of groups of stops from 60-10mph, so the speed is all nice and legal but as I have already mentioned, finding enough space to do so many stops without getting in the way of other road users or irritating people and potentially getting yourself in trouble can be tricky. I figured a good idea would be to take the Five out for a run in the late evening when I knew the country roads around me would be devoid of commuters and much quieter as a result. The run to the office and back home would give me some 12 miles to accomplish what I wanted, which should leave me plenty of room, even accounting for some of the villages along the way.

When I had taken the car home from MStyle earlier that day, I had been taking things easy as the brakes were fresh and not at their peak performance, so this would give me a chance to really give them a hammering and see how they held up. My plan worked, the roads were virtually deserted, so I started the bedding-in procedure, keeping an eye on the rear-view mirror for other cars so as not to cause any trouble. The brakes started off feeling good and got progressively better as the process went on, with no fade or softness to the pedal or drop-off in braking performance, which is exactly what you'd expect from a BBK as serious as this, but it was still impressive. I ended up doing around 30 or 40 stops in total and when I parked the 540 up at home I was certain the scent of hot brakes could be smelled for miles around and the evening air was filled with the sound of pinging metal as the stoppers cooled down.

With the bedding-in out of the way I could use the brakes as intended and I have to say that they are absolutely spectacular. The E39 is not a light car but the StopTech kit makes light work of stopping it – pedal feel is excellent. Firm but progressive. The brakes begin to bite near the very top of its travel, offering retardation from the off but they are easy to modulate, they're not



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snatchy and the stopping power they deliver is sensational. Driving briskly, they wipe off speed corner after corner without breaking a sweat and fade isn't part of their vocabulary – you can get on them hard, over and over and over again. They just keep delivering and refuse to let you down. In fact, they are so good and powerful that you do have to be mindful of the fact that other cars around you, and behind you in particular, can't stop as quickly as you can for hazards. The StopTech kit is not cheap, but it's worth every penny and delivers some of the most impressive braking I've ever experienced in 11 and a half years of motoring journalism.

While I was over at MStyle I also got the guys to fit my stud kit from CA Automotive. Stud kits are definitely getting more love on the scene these days and with good reason – for very little outlay you get a massive improvement in practicality and ease of use when it comes to wheels. If you, like many of us, find yourself swapping wheels at numerous points throughout the year depending on what look you want to go for or the relevant wheel for the season, doing this single-handed is a pain. Trying to balance a wheel on the hub with one hand and your knee while attempting to screw in a bolt with the other is not an easy task, especially once the wheel size goes up and starts getting heavier. Also, if you accidentally cross thread the hole in the hub, well, that's pretty much new hub time.

With a stud kit, all these woes are a thing of the past. The studs screw into the holes in your hub with an Allen key that slots into the ends and a bit of Loctite on the threads to keep them



in place. Then you can simply slide your wheel on the studs and then screw it in place with the nuts at your leisure. No more attempting to balance wheels on feet or knees, no more attempting to line them up with the holes on the hubs and no stress if you damage a stud – just screw it out and put a new one in, leaving your hub undamaged. Also, it makes fitting spacers a ten-second job – you simply slide the spacer over the studs rather than having to bolt it to the hub and as the spacer is held in place by the studs there's less to worry about when using smaller, non-hubcentric ones.

I opted for the 90mm stud kit (the longest supplied by CA Automotive), which allows me to use spacers up to 25mm. As the E39's 74.1 centre bore means finding wheels that are a direct fit can be tricky, the 90mm studs mean I can use thick spacer adapters if needs be to fit 72.6mm CB wheels and drop the offset low enough to make them look good on the E39. The kits comes with short black nuts as standard, but I fancied a bit of bling (as part of a grand plan) so I got a set of longer, open-ended anodised nuts in a neo chrome finish giving that rainbow, oil-slick look. I love the stud kit and the nuts – I think they look awesome and I love how the rainbow finish is reflected in the surface of the wheels around the holes. They certainly get plenty of attention!

I was also going to talk about my new wheels and tyres this month but I've run out of room, so that's what we'll be looking at next month!



OUR CARS



STEVEN'S E31 850Ci

After finally getting Hiro back on the road, I've been racking up the miles and enjoying driving her. While I would never describe an 850 as a sports car (it was never designed to be), it still handles well. The new suspension has transformed the way it drives, giving it real poise and sharp handling. While there's no disguising its two-tonne curb weight, it handles better than I expected. The brakes are improved too, with the new Pagid pads gripping well. Hopefully they'll stop squeaking soon, too.

However, it's the engine really that impresses the most. When new, it had 300hp, which when you consider it's a 5.0-litre V12 doesn't sound much. However in 1989 (when it was released) it was a huge amount. What's most impressive though is the 330lb ft of torque. There is power throughout the rev range, with immediate delivery too and none of that turbo lag that plagues modern machines. It's not often I agree with the Yanks, but their expression 'there's no replacement for displacement' is a phrase I agree with.

Now that Hiro was drivable, it was time to start

stage two of the restoration: bodywork. The sharper among you may have noticed that white was not its original colour. It was originally red, and has been resprayed a mystery colour of white (it's definitely not any of the BMW Alpine whites). I wouldn't call the spray job flawless, either, with the worst of it being on the front end. The front nose cone and splitter are also badly chipped and flaking, as well as being badly repaired from some previous fender bender. The front wings are also basically made of rust and so need replacing. As a result, I have decided that this area is my priority.

I've spent the last six months scouring the breakers and internet sourcing parts to replace them, and following the purchase of an 850CSi lower bumper (which is very rare), I have finally assembled all the parts required. They comprise a new nose cone, CSi lower bumper, both front wings and 840 sport mirrors. I've got no excuse for the mirrors, they just look good, and while they were unnecessary, I just couldn't resist. All the parts were sourced second-hand except the front

wings which were brand-new from BMW Germany (don't ask how much they cost!) as I couldn't find a pair in decent nick for reasonable money. I dropped all the parts off at my trusted sprayer who has spent the last week trying to colour-match the parts! Once finished, I'll be fitting them, and I can't wait to see the results. The splitter and mirrors should really add an aggressive look to the car.

The interior is another area that needed improving, so I started that this month with some wrapping. The centre, front and rear consoles were scratched, and the latch on the front console door was broken. I decided to wrap them in a carbon fibre-esque wrap to smarten them up and hide the marks. The 3M Di-NOC carbon fibre effect stuff is great and can be moulded to virtually any surface with heat. So the missus' hairdryer was employed and a few hours later the parts were done. I must say I'm pleased with the results. I also managed to fix the broken door, so it's a win-win.

I was feeling pretty pleased with everything this month... and then ABS light came back on. D'oh!



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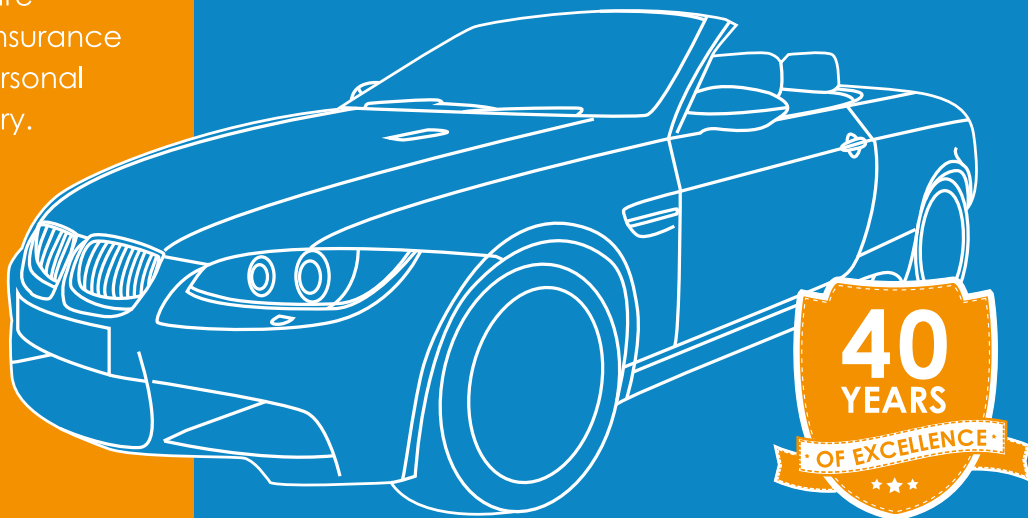
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PAUL'S E36 328i

There you go... doesn't that look a lot better? I know I haven't exactly broken any new ground with my E36 M3 bumper swap on to my 328, but you have to admit, it does look a whole lot more aggressive and purposeful than the rather slimline outgoing version, doesn't it?

That the fitment of my MStyle bumpers was going to add a visual improvement was never in question, but its resulting lovely look you can see here took a little work, for which I must tip my hat to Dan Nowell and his talented team at DR Bodyshop, down the road in Colwick, Nottingham. Dan and his team are more used to prepping top-end race cars and classics, but seeing as their rates are very reasonable and they're a great bunch of chaps, it's easy to persuade them to drop to a more mundane job like my E36.

Having taken the new bumper down to Dan, we also had a walk around the car to chat about the other dinks and scrapes that it had collected throughout its life. Although this is one relatively cosseted old Three, it still has a few marks and dents around an otherwise pristine body. Although this car will never be done to a show standard (I want to use it far too much for that ever to happen) I do like cars to be presentable if at all possible. With Dan scratching his chin and coming up with an epic 'mate's rates' price to include the rear-quarter dents too, as well as a bit of scratch and stone-chip retouching, we shook hands on a deal.

Used to working to race teams' exacting deadlines means that DR Bodyshop doesn't mess about, in fact as I was swilling the last of my tea and talking cods about cars with Dan, the lads had already steamed into sanding the rear dent to see what was what. As I was seeing myself out of the door, they already had the front bumper off! I reckoned to myself that this would be one of those jobs that wouldn't take long... and I was right!

The truly observant amongst you may have noticed that I have put the old girl back on to her 'pram' wheels for this small excursion. It's generally a good idea to put your old rollers on for any bodyshop visit, particularly if your Sunday best rims have polished edges. With all the wet flattening and compounding that goes on, it's one less thing for everyone to worry about! Although I knew Dan and his team would take the greatest care of my wheels, it made a lot of sense to take them off anyway.

During my initial trial fitting of the ultra-wide rear Toyo R888 boots, and before I had chance to have the rear arches pulled and rolled, I had managed to nick the outside edges of the fat Toyos on the inside of the rear arch lips. The perils of running low suspension and wide wheels, you see! Although there was no structural damage to the tyre, I wanted to swap the tyres around on the rims so these scuffs would be hidden on the inside. Luckily for me,

DR Bodyshop is right next door to my mate Ronny Demera at TreadMark wheels and tyres, so it was the work of minutes for me to pop over there, catch up with the latest and have Ronny swap them over. He wouldn't take any cash for the job either, so remind me to take a box of doughnuts the next time I'm round there, okay?

Before I could blink, a couple of days had passed and Dan was back on the blower sounding enthusiastic about the fact he and his team were all finished. Needless to say I got a lift over there pretty sharpish to see what they had managed to achieve. Although I was quite prepared for what I was about to see aesthetically, what I wasn't prepared for was the flawless quality of the work that DR had achieved – or indeed the simply stunning colour-match. Take it from someone who has partially painted a lot of silver cars, this is one of the hardest colours to do 'patch' repairs on, but the way Dan's team had applied the paint and carefully blended it to the old meant that it was now impossible to see where the old finished and the new began. Gentlemen, I salute you!

That's it for me this month. I'm off to the barn to get my Calibre rims bolted back up. So what's next? Well, on the way back home it was fairly obvious from the noise that the front discs were making that I'm almost completely out of pads. No prizes for guessing the subject of next month's gripping instalment then!



ROB'S E30 318i

Last month I left saying that I was off to the Silverstone Classic and a 100-mile drive through the countryside on the Retro Run. Well, the good news is that I made it... just. My roll-cage was a pig to put in and took the best part of a day – leaving a mad rush the next morning to fit the doors and the MoT basics such as bulbs and the like. Luckily the E30 passed with no advisories ready to make the 95-mile trip from deepest, darkest Surrey early the next morning. I won't bore you with tales from the Classic as to be honest it wasn't the most exciting weekend away, compounded by the awful weather on the Friday and Sunday, although I will include a

couple of photos of my favourite BMWs there.

I did, however, find various issues, mostly with my fiberglass bonnet lifting at motorway speeds and shaking out the mounts for the fastening pins, which had to be rectified for the rest of the weekend with duct tape. An extra strap in the middle of the bonnet and some vents to help get the air out from under it are my options I think.

Next month I'm fitting my coilovers. I thought it would be simple but it turns out it's not. All will be revealed next month. There is a deadline of the Retro Rides Gathering at Shelsley Walsh so as I'm writing I have a week to work out a solution, so fingers crossed aye?



OUR CARS



SAM'S E46 M3

Going back to when I first bought this car, I said to myself that I wouldn't buy any CSL products as I knew once I'd started I wouldn't be able to stop. Well, I kind of stuck to that. With the car progressing into a track car I only picked a few selective CSL goodies. The rear carbon diffuser is a copy but the fitment is spot on and the front splitter is also a copy but full length instead of the two carbon flippers the genuine bumper ran.

The last piece of the puzzle I wanted was a CSL bootlid as copies just don't cut the mustard! Getting hold of new items from BMW is a long wait even if you can blag past that sales team

that you even own a CSL so the hunt began in the second-hand market.

Deep down I'd wanted a CSL bootlid since day one as disappointingly on removal of the rear numberplate I was greeted by two drill holes right on the far corners of a full length plate. What was even more annoying is that they weren't even level. I never saw the point in getting a pre-face-lift tailgate painted so when I had some extra cash I trawled the forums till I found one. I wasn't lucky enough to get my hands on a colour-match item but I did secure a genuine bootlid none-the-less.

After having a word with my painter I got a little carried away. I'm not one for smoothing off everything but with the nature of my car, the rear parking sensors were wasted and the finish on them had seen better days, so I decided to delete those out too. It also meant I could lose another control unit out of the boot.

I had my friend Daniel at Jager Body Repairs do the paint and smoothing, and he even roped in another well-known name in the BMW game, Ben Anson (who owns the green E21), to do the prep work on my bootlid. I have to say a massive thanks to the guys as the outcome is great!





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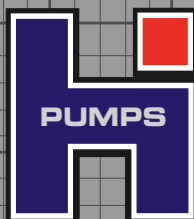
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MARTIJN VAN DER ESCH E30 325i

Hailing from Holland, Martijn is the proud owner of two E30s and comes to us this month with one of them, his 325i Cab (the other is a two-door running an M52B28, Alpina interior and Porsche brakes). As far as this car is concerned, it started out life as a 325i but, according to Martijn, went on to be a 330i and should have become a 335i when he happened across an Alpina B10 engine he just had to buy... With the Buchloe straight-six slotted into the engine bay this E30 is now putting out 254hp and no doubt sounds fantastic through the stainless exhaust that has been fitted. E34 540i brakes help on the stopping front and the car sits on a set of classic Azev A 17s, with Bilstein B8 dampers. The exterior was resprayed in Gletscher blue back in 2007 and Martijn has fitted smoked head- and tail-lights while the inside is trimmed in black leather with an Alpina steering wheel as well as a short shift kit, which all adds up to one striking E30.

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ALIF AIMAN E65 735i

We don't see many E65s in the mag and certainly not from as far away as Malaysia, so when Alif got in touch with his example, we thought it rude not to pop it in here. His E65 boasts Hamann-style front and rear bumpers along with Hamann-style boot and roof spoilers and Alif has also fitted some black M Sport kidney grilles, red angel eyes and BMW logo puddle lights. A set of staggered Hartge Classic 2 19s finished in hyper black have been fitted, and the car has been lowered with a set of H&R springs. Alif has also upgraded the brakes, adding stainless steel braided hoses and cross-drilled and grooved discs. Finally, he's also upgraded the audio and the car has been fitted with digital amps, uprated speakers, cables and connectors to really be able to enjoy his music. We applaud his bold styling choices and the fact that he's done something a bit different.



DANIEL SPENCER E46 325Ci

Two years ago, Daniel bought himself a completely standard E46 325Ci and today he owns a very nicely modified example that's subtle and striking all at once. His girlfriend might not be interested in hearing about it, but we certainly are. The first thing that hits you are those Style 92 19s, removed from an E63 6 Series, which look really fantastic on the E46, especially with the arches wrapped right around them, courtesy of a drop from a set of V-Maxx coilovers. The arches themselves have been fitted with overfenders, which have then been smoothed into the bodywork. To further help get the stance perfect, Daniel has fitted a set of E36 M3 Evo front top mounts, reverse mounted for some negative camber and the rear arms have been set for maximum negative camber too. Elsewhere there's a K&N air filter and the centre resonator has been removed; a combo that not only offers more go, but a bit more noise to boot. Amber front indicators and repeaters, red rear lights and pressed plates add the finishing touches. Good work, Daniel.

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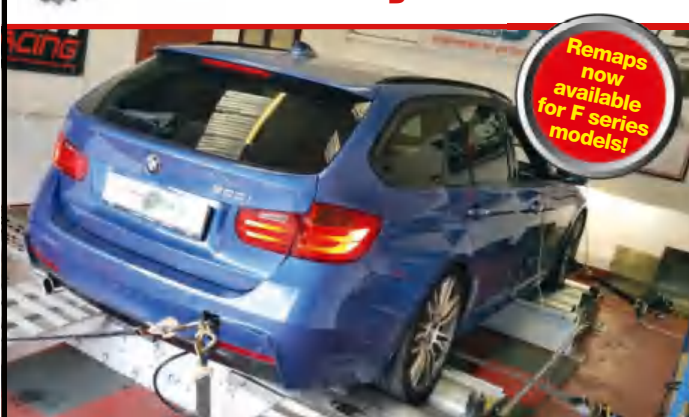
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